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The Folk-Lore Society,

FOR COLLECTING AND PRINTING

RELICS OF POPULAR ANTIQUITIES, &c.

ESTABLISHED IN


THE YEAR MDCCCLXXVIII.



Alter et Idem.

PUBLICATIONS
OF
THE FOLK-LORE SOCIETY.

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I. "The Folk-Lore Society" has for its object the preservation and publication of Popular Traditions, Legendary Ballads, Local Proverbial Sayings, Superstitions and Old Customs (British and foreign), and all subjects relating to them.

II. The Society shall consist of Members being subscribers to its funds of One Guinea annually, payable in advance on the 1st of January in each year.

III. A Member of the Society may at any time compound for future annual subscriptions by payment of Ten Guineas over and above the subscription for the current year.

IV. An Annual General Meeting of the Society shall be held in London at such time and place as the Council from time to time appoint. No Member whose subscription is in arrear shall be entitled to vote or take part in the proceedings of the Meeting.

V. The affairs of the Society, including the admission of Members, shall be conducted by a President and a Council of twelve Members, who shall from among themselves elect a Director, Treasurer, and Secretary. The Council shall have power to fill up occasional vacancies in their number.

VI. At each Annual General Meeting all the Members of the Council shall retire from office, but shall be eligible for re-election.

VII. The accounts of the receipts and expenditure of the Society shall be audited annually by two Auditors, to be elected at the General Meeting.

VIII. Any Member who shall be one year in arrear of his subscription shall cease to be a Member of the Society.

IX. Every Member (whose subscription shall not be in arrear) shall be entitled to a copy of each of the ordinary works published by the Society.

X. No alteration shall be made in these Rules except at a Special General Meeting of the Society, and upon the requisition of at least five Members, nor then unless at least one month's previous notice of the change to be proposed shall have been given in writing to the Secretary. The alteration proposed shall be approved by at least three-fourths of the Members present at such Meeting.



THE
FOLK-LORE RECORD,

PART I.

CONTAINING—

PREFACE.

SOME WEST SUSSEX SUPERSTITIONS LINGERING IN
1868. By MRS. LATHAM.

MISCELLANEOUS :—

NOTES ON FOLK-TALES. By W. R. S. RALSTON, M.A.

THE FOLK-LORE OF FRANCE. By A. LANG, M.A.

SOME JAPAN FOLK-TALES. By C. PFOUNDEN.

A FOLK-TALE AND VARIOUS SUPERSTITIONS OF THE
HIDATSA INDIANS. Communicated by DR. E. B. TYLOR.

CHAUCER'S NIGHT-SPELL. By WILLIAM J. THOMS, F.S.A.

PLANT-LORE NOTES TO MRS. LATHAM'S WEST SUSSEX
SUPERSTITIONS. By JAMES BRITTEN, F.L.S.

YORKSHIRE LOCAL RHYMES AND SAYINGS

DIVINATION BY THE BLADE-BONE. By WILLIAM J. THOMS, F.S.A.

INDEX TO THE FOLK-LORE IN THE FIRST SERIES OF HARD-
WICKE'S "SCIENCE-GOSSIP." By JAMES BRITTEN, F.L.S.

SOME ITALIAN FOLK-LORE. By HENRY CHARLES COOTE, F.S.A.

WART AND WEN CURES. By JAMES HARDY.

FAIRIES AT ILKLEY WELLS. By CHARLES C. SMITH.

NOTES.

QUERIES.

NOTICES AND NEWS.

THE PREFACE.

I have been invited to introduce this volume to the Members of the Folk-Lore Society. I have accepted the honour so kindly offered me with mingled feelings of satisfaction and regret.

I am naturally gratified at being permitted to take part in a movement calculated to advance a department of literary inquiry, which, ever since I read in the *Quarterly Review*, some fifty years ago, the admirable articles by the late Sir Francis Palgrave, on popular Literature, Superstitions and Customs, and similar matters, now commonly recognised under the generic name of *Folk-Lore* (originally suggested by an anonymous writer in *The Athenæum* of 22nd August 1846), has ever had a fascination for me, which has led me to return to the subject—one of *mes premières amours*, whenever the graver duties of a long official life gave me an opportunity of doing so.

When in the early part of 1876 an accomplished writer in *Notes and Queries* suggested the formation of a Folk-Lore Society, I was, for reasons which it would be impertinent to enter upon here, unable to do more than wish the proposal God speed; and it was not until after a strong personal appeal to me on the part of the proposer, and a growing fear on my own part, from what I saw in the Correspondence on the subject, lest the idea should fall to the ground, that, though conscious that my age ought almost to forbid my doing so, I came forward and placed my thirty-four years' experience as Secretary of the Camden Society at the service of the Folk-Lore loving public.

I hope that the present volume will be received by the

Members for its interest and variety with that satisfaction which I believe it deserves, and also as a proof that the Folk-Lore Society is now safely established. These are the grounds of my gratification.

My regret is that the pleasant duty of introducing such volume to the Society has not been performed by some of those more learned members of the Council whose papers constitute its chief claim to that approval which I do not hesitate to claim for it.

In the Prospectus of the Society a hope was expressed that it would publish a translation of Grimm's *Deutsche Mythologie*. I am probably mainly responsible for that suggestion, inasmuch as the book has long been an especial favourite of mine, although I am well aware of what was recently urged against it, that it is as much, if not more, Scandinavian than Teutonic. But this is not in my mind an objection, as, be it what it may, it is essentially the great storehouse of illustrations of the popular superstitions of these islands.

That intention is, however, abandoned; as a translation of the work, which is understood to be far advanced, will be published by Mr. Sonnenschein, a Member of the Society. This is to a certain extent an advantage, as it will leave the funds, which would have been expended upon the Grimm, available for others of the many works of interest which the widening labours in the Society will be sure to call forth. In the course of the coming year the Council hope to place in the hands of the Members, *in its entirety*, a work of great importance, from its early and special reference to English Folk-Lore—a work hitherto only known to English students in a very fragmentary form. I refer to the interesting Lansdowne MS. No. 231, containing Aubrey's materials (with some additions by Dr. White Kennett, Bishop of Peterborough) for a work, the publication of which he had contemplated under the title of "*Remains of Gentilisme and Judaisme*," and in which it appears he had proposed to draw a

parallel between the superstitions of Greece and Rome and those of his own country; finding the records or rather traces of the former in the works of their Poets; and collecting his English stores from the communications of his friends. It is a MS. of which the late Sir Henry Ellis availed himself largely in his valuable edition of Brand's *Popular Antiquities*, and from which the present writer made some curious extracts in the volume of *Anecdotes and Traditions* published by the Camden Society in 1839. A transcript of the MS. in question is being made under the superintendence of Mr. James Britten, of the British Museum, who has kindly undertaken to see it through the press.

In the face of Anthony Wood's spiteful character of Aubrey, "as a shiftless person, roving and magotie-headed," English Literature owes him much, as those who know his *Natural History of Surrey* and *The Letters from the Bodleian* will readily admit. His brother Wiltshire antiquary, John Britton, who published his *Life*, has done him justice, and perhaps on this subject I may be permitted to endorse Britton's views, as I once heard them admirably endorsed by that readiest of wits, Theodore Hook.

It was formerly the custom, the disuse of which is to be regretted, for the Society of Antiquaries to dine together after the anniversary meeting on St. George's Day, which it will be remembered is also the reputed birthday of Shakespeare, so that some allusion to the Great Poet was invariably brought before the Fellows. Some forty years ago, when there was a great controversy raging as to the manner in which Shakespeare spelt his own name, or whether he could spell it at all, some allusion having been made, I think by the President, Lord Aberdeen, to this controversy, old John Britton, who dearly loved to make a speech, delivered at some length his opinion on this important point. Even in that grave society there were always some few spirits who loved a joke, so, no sooner had Britton resumed his seat than there arose a cry, "Mr. Hook! Mr. Hook! Mr. Hook!"

with a view of getting a speech from him upon the subject. Their wish was gratified. They got it, and very short and effective it was. Hook (I was seated close to him) arose, and every noise was hushed, as with great gravity he said, "I am a true Britton!" The effect was electrical.

And so with regard to the Biographer of Aubrey's eulogium on his Wiltshire predecessor, "I am a true Britton!" and venture to predict that Aubrey's *Judaism and Gentilism* will be heartily welcomed by every Member of the Folk-Lore Society.

One word more. Since the Society was formed, our active and intelligent Secretary, Mr. Gomme, has "tapped"—(I thank thee, Horace Walpole, for teaching me that word)—has tapped a subject which is, I believe, new in this country. I allude to our English FIELD NAMES, which, as Mr. Gomme justly observes in his public appeal "for lists of them," are "eminently of historical value, being so indicative of local legend." Those who remember the chapters on the "Anglo-Saxon Local Names" in Dr. Leo's *Rectitudines Singularum Personarum* will, I doubt not, feel that I am justified in the hope that a thorough investigation of these Field Names will contribute much new illustration of the bygone mythology of England.

WILLIAM J. THOMS.



SOME

WEST SUSSEX SUPERSTITIONS

LINGERING IN 1868.

COLLECTED BY

CHARLOTTE LATHAM, AT FITTLEWORTH.

P R E F A C E.

During the long desultory process of collecting the following instances of our existing superstitions, it has been my practice always to write down, at the very earliest opportunity, the scraps of homely conversation in which they were communicated to me by the professed believer in them. I find that by referring to these notes I have each particular case brought back more vividly to my recollection, and am satisfied of its authenticity ; by preserving them, I shall perhaps enable others to form a truer judgment than they could otherwise arrive at of the degree of faith existing in the original narrator.

C. L.

Torquay, 1878.

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WEST SUSSEX SUPERSTITIONS.

CHAPTER I.

PROGNOSTICS OF GOOD AND EVIL.



IT is the hardest thing in the world to shake off superstitious prejudices: they are sucked in, as it were, with our mother's milk; and, growing up with us at a time when they take the fastest hold and make the most lasting impressions, become so interwoven into our very constitutions, that the strongest good sense is required to disengage ourselves from them. No wonder, therefore, that the lower people retain them their whole lives through, since their minds are not invigorated by a liberal education, and therefore not enabled to make any efforts adequate to the occasion. Such a preamble appears to be necessary before we enter on the superstitions of this district, lest we should be suspected of exaggeration in a recital of practices too gross for this enlightened age."

These were the words of Gilbert White of Selborne,* written in 1776; and, if such a preamble appeared necessary then, how much more needful may it be considered now, in speaking of the equally gross superstitions still lingering in a district not very far removed from Selborne. The rising generation are indeed gradually learning to despise this folk-lore of their fathers; and in referring to it they will generally add some expression indicative of their attitude towards it, *e.g.*, "not that I believe in charms, or in good or bad signs, but I have heard my mother say a crow's cawing three times as it flew over the house was a sign of death;" or, "I know an old woman, who, it is said, can cure burns and scalds by saying a charm over them: but

* *The Natural History of Selborne*, vol. i. p. 342, ed. 1813.

I dare say it is all fancy;" evidently wishing you to believe that in these times such things are only received by "the superstitious idle-headed eld." But in truth, though the folk of now-a-days may affect to laugh at the old lore, they have not risen above its influence. To expect them to make a frank confession of the fact, in "this enlightened age," is to demand too much of their moral courage; but the following record will prove that their condition has not been misrepresented, showing that in West Sussex alone there is a people whose life is leavened by the most startling superstitions, and whose most cherished worldly wisdom has been gained from "old wives' fables."

Inhabitants of the weald and wold of Sussex still put their faith in a great variety of good and bad signs.

(1) In speaking of the magpie, they confidently tell you that —

"One is for sorrow, two for mirth,
Three for a wedding, four for a birth;"

and (2) the perching of a magpie on the roof of a house is regarded as a good sign, a proof of that house being in no danger of falling.

(3) We speak figuratively of the one black sheep that is the cause of sorrow in a family; but in its reality it is regarded by the Sussex shepherd as an omen of good luck to his flock.

(4) If a strange dog or a strange black cat come to your house and remain domesticated there, it brings good fortune. So when a cat from a distance becomes restless, and tries to make her escape, put her into the cold oven, for it is said that the effect upon her will be that she will forget her former home as completely as if she had lapped of Lethe's water.

(5) It is considered lucky to see the new moon over your right shoulder.

(6) Should you cut your nails on a Monday morning without thinking of a fox's tail, you will have a present made to you.

(7) Babies' caps must be left off on a Sunday for the first time and no cold will be taken.

(8) It is lucky to put on a stocking wrong side out; but it is unlucky to turn it on your discovery of the mistake.

(9) Good fortune will follow if you pick up a horse-shoe.

(10) If you were born on Christmas Day, you will neither be drowned nor hanged.

(11) It is lucky to be the first to open the house-door on this festival; and in my youth I was once persuaded by my nurse to get up with her before any other members of the family that we might divide this luck between us, she throwing open the door that led to the offices, while I admitted Christmas by the hall-door, saying, as I had been instructed by her, "Welcome, Old Father Christmas!"

(12) To kill the first snake you see in any year will give you power over your enemies for the rest of the twelvemonth, and (13) the skin of a snake hung up in a house is supposed to bring good luck.

(14) To find a swarm of bees in a hedge, or for a strange swarm to settle in your garden, is looked upon as a sign of extraordinary good fortune.

(15) If you catch a falling leaf, you will have twelve months of continued happiness.

(16) If you find nine peas in the first pod you gather, it bodes you good luck.

Our prognostics of misfortune are still more numerous.

(17) The popular belief is that one magpie seen on your left hand is a certain sign of coming woe.

(18) Perhaps it is the hope of averting by extreme civility the evil which the magpie is about to bring upon them that induces Sussex people of every class to take off their hats and bow to this bird whenever it suddenly appears on their left hand. Whenever I questioned my poorer neighbours about their evident dislike of it, they always answered that it was a bad bird, and knew more than it should do, and was always looking about and prying into other people's affairs.

(19) There is a general belief that its perching on any beast is a bad omen for the animal; and it has perhaps some truth in it: for before the farmer or the shepherd is aware of it, the magpie often smells out a lurking disease, and is known to attack and tear out the eyes of weakly sheep and lambs.

We have several superstitions connected with the cuckoo. She (every cuckoo being a female here, in Sussex) is a general favourite,

and I have heard her return in early Spring announced by children singing, —

- (20) "The cuckoo's a merry bird : sings as she flies ;
 She brings us good tidings, and tells us no lies.
 She picks up the dirt in the Spring of the year,
 And sucks little birds' eggs, to make her voice clear."

The scandal contained in the last line it would be useless to attempt to disprove.

(21) When you first hear the cuckoo in the Spring, if you have no money in your pocket, or do not turn it if you have, you will be poor for the remainder of the year.

(22) There is a superstitious feeling that will not allow birds' eggs to be brought into a house, though long strings of them may generally be seen in Spring hanging up in out-houses. It is thought that they bring bad luck. "As if," says Knapp, speaking of a similar dislike to them in the West of England (*Journal of a Naturalist*, p. 225, ed. 1838), "they were in some way offensive to the domestic deity of the hearth." (23) Another egg superstition is, that the bottom of the shell should be always broken through by you after you have eaten the contents, and I remember with what energy at our nurse's bidding we used to burst the bottom of egg-shells with spoons to disappoint the witches, who, we were told, would otherwise put out to sea in them.

To have one black sheep has been mentioned as an omen of good fortune ;* but (24) to have two or three is accounted the reverse.

(25) Even the most favoured cat, if heard to sneeze, is instantly shut out of the house ; for, should she stay to repeat the sneeze three times indoors, the whole family will have colds and coughs.

Many of our Sussex superstitions are probably of Saxon origin ; amongst which may be (26) the custom of bowing or curtseying to the new or Lady Moon, as she is styled, to deprecate bad luck. There is another kindred superstition (27), that the Queen of Night will dart malignant rays upon you, if, on the first day of her reappearance, you look up to her without money in your pocket. But if you are not fortunate enough to have any there, in order to avert her evil aspect,

* See (3)

you must immediately turn head-over-heels ! (28) It is considered unlucky to see the new moon through a window-pane, and I have known a maid-servant shut her eyes when closing the shutters lest she should unexpectedly see it through the glass. (29) Do not kill your pig until full moon, or the pork will be ruined.

(30) A child's nails must not be cut before it is a year old, or else it will be light-fingered ; and (31) should you trim your own on a Sunday morning, you will come to grief before Saturday.

(32) You must not turn a feather-bed on a Sunday, or the person who sleeps on it will have fearful dreams for the rest of the week.

(33) If you sell bottles that have contained medicine, you will require them to be filled again for yourself.

(34) Beware, too, of singing before breakfast : if you sing before breakfast, you will cry before night. I have found this superstition prevalent amongst both gentle and simple ; and I know a very highly educated lady who seems to place implicit faith in it.

(35) Those women who would avoid becoming mothers of an overwhelming progeny, must not allow any one to rock their cradles when they are empty :

“ If you rock the cradle empty
Then you shall have babies plenty.”

A schoolmistress in the adjoining parish was always rating her scholars if they touched her cradle, and exclaiming, “ There ! leave that alone, can't ye ? I have children enough already ! ”

(36) It is unlucky to carry a baby downstairs before it is carried up, and, if there are no stairs up which it can be carried, the nurse must mount upon a high chair with the baby in her arms.

(37) It is unlucky to divulge a child's intended name before its Baptism. (38) The water sprinkled on an infant's forehead at the font must on no account be wiped off ; and (39) it must cry at the Christening, or ill luck will follow. The hold which this last superstition has, even upon educated people, is extraordinary. It is believed that when the child cries the evil spirit is in the act of quitting it ; and I was lately present at a Christening in Sussex, when a lady of the party, who was grandmother of the child, whispered in a voice of anxiety, “ The child never cried ; why did not the nurse rouse it up ? ”

After we had left the church she said to her, "Oh! Nurse, why did not you pinch baby?" And, when the baby's good behaviour was afterwards commented upon, she observed, with a very serious air, "I wish that he had cried."

(40) You must not collect hailstones. Old Mrs. Cooper says that it is manifest impiety, because if they are put into a wine-glass you will see that they always run through it, and leave a slop underneath.

(41) It is ominous of evil to spill salt; or (42) to lay your knife and fork across each other. These are two very wide-spread superstitions. The first of them has been handed down to us from the Romans. Gay, who attributes both of them to his old market-woman, was from the north of Devonshire:

"The salt was spilt, to me it fell,
Then to contribute to my loss,
My knife and fork were laid across."

(*Fable xxxvii*—"The Farmer's Wife and the Raven.")

(43) You must not give a knife or anything sharp-edged to one whom you love, or it will cut your love asunder. I once presented a servant with a pair of scissors, who at first seemed pleased, then coloured deeply, and producing a penny from her pocket begged me to take it, observing it was so unlucky to accept any sharp instrument without making some small return for it.

(44) Green is an unlucky colour. I have known several instances of mothers absolutely forbidding it in articles of dress, or in the furniture of their houses. (45) But to be dressed in green and white, according to the popular rhymes, must, in the eyes of a Sussex maiden, be tantamount to wearing the willow:

"Those dressed in blue
Have lovers true;
In green and white,
Forsaken quite."

(46) Never have your clothes mended on your back, or you will come to want.

(47) It is very unlucky to see a snake dead or alive upon the road.

(48) To put on the left shoe before the right is a sign of evil to come.

(49) Let not Friday be your wedding-day, or you and your wife will lead a cat-and-dog life. (50) Begin not a piece of work on Friday or you will never finish it; (51) neither must you set off on a journey, (52) nor put out to sea on a Friday, or some misfortune will befall you. The superstitious dread of placing any dependence on this day is almost universal. A tradition, I have heard, that Adam and Eve ate the forbidden fruit upon a Friday, assigns a very early origin to its unfortunate reputation.

(53) Bad luck always follows the killing of a house-cricket, or (54) the taking of a swallow's nest that is built under your eaves. (55) You will also bring trouble on your house, if you cut down the house-leek, or sungreen as it is called in Sussex, which has sprung up on your roof.

(56) It is the custom, in the cider districts of Sussex, to *worsle* (wassail) the apple-trees on New Year's Eve, and for several succeeding days, and it is considered unlucky to omit doing so. Farmers give a few pence to the worslers, who form a circle round the trees, and sing at the top of their voices—

“Stand fast root,
Bear well top,
Pray God send us
A good howling crop.
Every twig
Apples big,
Every bough
Apples enow.
Hats full, caps full,
Full quarter sacks full,
Holla, boys, holla! Huzzah!”

and then all shout in chorus, with the exception of one boy, who blows a loud blast on a cow's horn. Last New Year's Eve the mother of a sick boy told me that her poor child was sadly put out because he was not able to go and worsle his grandfather's apple-trees; and it is quite certain that both mother and child expected a total failure of the apple crop in the grandfather's orchard to follow the omission.

(57) To dream of a cat is accounted unlucky—but of what is it *not* considered unlucky to dream? (58) If your dearest friend appears before you in your sleep, it bodes coming trouble to you or to

him. (59) To dream about your teeth is a warning that sorrow of some kind is near at hand.

(60) The following extraordinary superstition was mentioned by a farmer's wife living near Arundel. She is in the habit of making every year a large quantity of blackberry jam, and, finding that less fruit than she required had been brought to her this autumn, she said to the charwoman, her assistant, "I wish you would send out some of your children to gather me three or four pints more." "Ma'am!" exclaimed the woman, "don't you know this is the 11th of October?" "Yes," was the answer. "Bless me, ma'am!" the response, "and you ask me to let my children go out black-berrying! Why, I thought everybody knew that the Devil went round on the 10th of October, and spat on all the blackberries, and that if any person were to eat one on the eleventh they or some belonging to them would die or fall into great trouble before the year was out. No, nothing should persuade me to let any child of mine go black-berrying on the 11th of October." (61) The watchfulness of the said Evil Spirit makes it dangerous to go out nutting on a Sunday, and worthy mothers may be heard warning their children against it by assuring them that, if they do so, the Devil will hold down the branches for them. We have a saying amongst us, "as black as the Devil's nutting-bag," which seems associated with this belief.

CHAPTER II.

OTHER WONDERS THAT ARE IMPLICITLY BELIEVED, BUT WITHOUT ANY GOOD OR EVIL CONSEQUENCES BEING ATTACHED TO THEM.



MENTION will now be made of a large class of superstitions, which are simply wondrous fictions implicitly accepted as facts, on no ground whatever.

(62) We believe in Sussex that a snake, though cut in two, cannot die until the sun has set; and I have heard of (63) a labourer declaring that the “queer marks” on the belly of the deaf adder could be made out to be—

“If I could hear as well as see,
No mortal man should master me.”

From time immemorial, snakes or serpents so big that they looked like dragons have terrified the population of our rural districts, and during the past year what is called in our expressive dialect “an ouldacious large one” was said to be in this neighbourhood. Its lair was near a by-path, which it would not permit any one to traverse. It would rush out and drive back with a terrible hissing and a very bad smell any luckless wight who wandered in that direction. This audacious snake is doubtless a relation of the dragon serpent reported to have inhabited St. Leonard’s forest in the seventeenth century, and which (says the author of the “true and wonderful” account of it) was oftentimes seen “at a place called Faygate, and it hath been seen within half a mile of Horsham, a wonder, no doubt, most terrible and noisome to the inhabitants thereabouts.” He then gives a long description of the serpent, which he ends by saying that “there are likewise on either side of him discovered two great bunches so big as a large foot-ball, and, as some think, will in time grow to wings; but God, I hope, will defend the poor people in the neighbourhood, that he shall

be destroyed before he grow so fledged." A man going to chase it, and as he thought to destroy it, with two mastiff dogs, (the author tells us) "as yet not knowing the great danger of it, his dogs were both killed, and he himself glad to return with haste to preserve his own life."*

(64) It is a popular belief that immense wealth lies buried under ground in various localities, and that it is mysteriously guarded from all interference. In a neighbouring parish the spot adjoins a road that sounds "awful hollow" as you walk over it, and in this instance the buried treasure has a very watchful guard, which instantly starts out of a ditch if it hears any one approaching. A woman told the clergyman's wife that she had actually seen *it*, and that *it* was clad in brown. An old inhabitant of Pulborough has assured me that there is great wealth buried under the Mount there, and that they once had a clergyman who used to dig round about it probably, I should think, engaged in some archæological investigation relative to the mound. In our own parish we have a nightly watcher over some hidden treasures in a wood through which a public foot-path passes, that certainly sounds hollow to the tread from the interlacement of the masses of roots below it. It is traversed but by few after dark, from a dread of encountering this unearthly guardian. The folk share the superstition of Horatio in his suggestion to the Ghost of Hamlet's father:

" If thou hast uphoarded in thy life
Extorted treasure in the womb of earth,
For which, they say, you spirits oft walk in death "

(Act i. Sc. 1.)

At Offington, near Worthing, an old seat of the Delawarrs, a blocked-up passage, which can only be approached from the cellars, is still believed to communicate with the encampment on Cisbury Hill, and to be full of buried treasures. Some years ago there was a story

* The full title of this account is *True and Wonderful A Discourse relating a strange and monstrous serpent, or dragon, lately discovered and yet living to the great annoyance and divers slaughters both men and cattell, by his strong and violent poyson. In Sussex, two miles from Horsam, in a woode called St. Leonard's Forrest, and thirtie miles from London, this present month of August, 1614. Printed at London by John Trundle 1614.* A reprint of it is to be found in part vii. of the *Miscellanea Antiqua Anglicana*, by Charles Hindley.

current of the then occupier of the house having offered half the money to be found there to anybody who would clear out the subterranean passage, and that several persons had begun digging, but had all been driven back by large snakes springing at them with open mouths and angry hisses.

(65) There is an old belief, held by many here, that on St. John's Eve all the beasts of the field go down upon their knees at the hour of midnight. We have also the extraordinary superstition that (66) the ghosts of dogs occasionally walk abroad, unheard, unseen, except by their own species. I was once informed by a servant, whom I had desired to go downstairs and try to stop the barking of a dog, which I was afraid would waken a sleeping invalid, that nothing would stop his noise, for she knew quite well, by his manner of barking, that the ghost of another dog was walking about the garden and terrifying him.

(67) We believe in Sussex that a curse lights upon the ground on which human blood has been shed, the same effect being produced as would follow the sowing of it with salt, that it will remain barren for ever. There is a dark-looking piece of ground totally devoid of verdure in the parish of Kirdford, which is said to have been once green with grass, but the grass withered away soon after the blood of a poacher who was shot there trickled down upon the spot.

(68) There is a childish legend current with us, if not popularly believed, that a certain old woman of irascible temper has charge of all the cuckoos, and that in the spring she fills her apron with them, and, if she is in a good humour, allows several to take flight, but only permits one or two to escape if anything has happened to sour her temper. This spring a woman of the village complained quite pathetically of the bad humour of the cuckoo-keeper, who had only let one bird fly out of her apron, and "that 'ere bird is nothing to call a singer." (69) Some of us think that at a certain period the cuckoo changes into a hawk.

(70) A cat born in May is supposed to be inclined to melancholy, and to be much addicted to catching snakes and reptiles and bringing them into the house. I had heard that this West-country belief existed in our village; and, very lately observing a most dejected looking cat by the fire in a cottage, said in jest, "I should think that cat was born

in May." "Oh yes," said the owner of it, "that she was, and so was her mother; and she was just as sad looking, and was always bringing snakes and vipers within doors."

(71) The belief that a baby and a kitten cannot thrive in the same house is far from being peculiar to Sussex.

(72) They say that a tree with a magpie's nest in it was never known to fall.* The instinct of the bird may lead it to fix upon a firmly-rooted tree, but the assumed fact is stated as a proof of its supernatural knowledge and of its being in league with the powers of darkness.†

(73) The fern-owl (*Strix caprimulgus*) is in the west of Sussex called the puck bird, or puck, which was an old Gothic word for Satan; and it probably received the name from a belief existing among the lower class of persons that it is a mischievous sprite, which inflicts on calves and heifers a disease here called the "puck complaint," and in some parts of England the "puckeridge." There are places where the bird itself is so named. When it makes its suspicious descents on the bodies of cattle grazing in the summer evenings, it is an object of terror to the superstitious, who regard its evolutions as it springs up suddenly from the grass in the dusk, or flies around them, making its long pliant wings clash over its back with a loud snap, as not being those of any earthly bird. A servant here, sent upon an errand, who was very long in returning, gave as a reason for the delay that the puck would fly before her, and she did not dare to cross its path. Jesse mentions in his *Gleanings in Natural History* (3rd S. p. 189) that an old farmer told him he had been sometimes so boldly attacked by the fern-owl when returning home late of an evening as to be in some degree of fear. He adds, however, that instead of being noxious and mischievous it is the most harmless and useful of birds.

* See (2).

† See (18).

CHAPTER III.

GHOSTS, GOBLINS, WITCHES AND FAIRIES.



BELIEF in the apparition of Ghosts and Goblins still maintains its hold upon the minds of our West Sussex peasantry almost as firmly as in the time of their less-instructed forefathers. I do not know to what enlightenment in these matters the youth of other counties have attained, but I can bear witness to the contemporary darkness of young Sussex. A short time ago there was committed to me the teaching of a Sunday School class composed principally of tradesmen's children, who, on my asking them if they knew what was meant by their "ghostly enemy," one and all replied, "Yes, a spirit that comes back from the grave;" and as they showed an eagerness to tell me everything they knew upon the subject, I allowed them to go on. They then spoke all at once, and quite overwhelmed me with the stories of what their fathers, mothers, brothers, or relations, in whom they placed the same implicit trust, had seen. (74) Some spirits were reported to walk about without their heads, others carried them under their arms, and one, haunting a dark lane, had a ball of fire upon its shoulders in lieu of the natural finial. On my explaining the true meaning of the term "ghostly enemy," a fresh torrent of superstitious narrative burst forth. (75) One boy knew a man who had seen the devil, and another told a fearful story of a poor sinner who saw little devils dancing round his bed "when he was a dying," though nobody else could see them; and then followed the account of a man who was always seeing the devil, or the "black man," as he was styled by most of them.

Their early Sussex nurture had been probably too like my own; for what nights of misery does that name, the black man, bring back to my memory! I almost shudder now at the recollection of the sleepless hours he caused me in my childhood, and of the dark closet

in my bedroom from which I had been taught to look for his appearance with "Dame Dark." Such tales by superstitious nurses are very generally prevalent.

(76) There stood, and still may stand, upon the downs, close to Broadwater, an old oak-tree, that I used, in days gone by, to gaze at with an uncomfortable and suspicious look from having heard that always on Midsummer Eve, just at midnight, a number of skeletons started up from its roots, and, joining hands, danced round it till cock-crow, and then as suddenly sank down again. My informant knew several persons who had actually seen this dance of death, but one young man in particular was named to me who, having been detained at Finden by business till very late, and forgetting that it was Midsummer Eve, had been frightened (no difficult matter we may suspect) out of his very senses by seeing the dead men capering to the rattling of their own bones.

I could give many a village tale of later years in proof of the existing belief of these ghostly visitants often appearing amongst us. Sometimes they are supposed to come in order to inform us of a death of which we have not previously had any notification, or they come with a dejected look to signify that all is not right, and they wish inquiries to be made about their death and burial, or the purpose of their coming is to upbraid an unkind husband or wife with his or her ill-treatment of them. And sometimes they are ghostly representatives of the living, such as those apparitions of a lover or a future husband to be mentioned in the chapter of superstitions associated with love and marriage.*

(77) We have amongst us ghosts even of the brute creation; a headless horse tears madly up and down a lane in Tillington, and the apparition of a headless pig is seen occasionally in the parish.

(78) It is likely that the present disposition to believe in ghost stories is in a great measure traditionary from the last generation, when smuggling was in the ascendant. For I believe that the vigi-

* A ghost, "not three feet in height, and dressed in a round frock and brown gaiters," has been seen repeatedly by the keepers of Captain Barttelot [now Sir Walter Barttelot, M.P.] in the wood about Hilliers; one of the men saw it standing by a stile, and attempted to catch hold of it, but his hand passed through the figure!

lance of the Preventive Service has laid many ghosts in Sussex ; there being very little doubt that the numerous ghosts seen wandering formerly in blue flames, near lonely houses on the coast, were of an illicit class of spirits, raised by the smugglers in order to alarm and drive all others but their accomplices from their haunts. In those days the unearthly noises heard night after night in a house at Rottingdean caused such alarm amongst the servants that they all gave warning ; when suddenly the noises ceased, and soon afterwards one of a gang of smugglers, who had fallen into the hands of the police, confessed to their having made a secret passage from the beach close by this house, and, that wishing to induce the occupiers to abandon it, they had been in the habit of rolling at the dead of night tub after tub of spirits up the passage, and had so caused it to be reported that the place was haunted.

Much discomfort was, about the same time, caused in another house upon the coast, by the nightly report of noises being heard beneath the kitchen floor, and crockery rattling, and chairs and tables being moved from their places, by some unseen agency. But, when the cook, at last, solemnly assured her master, that one evening, just as it was growing dusk, a ghostly head, with black hair and fiery eyes, had risen up suddenly from the floor and shaken itself at her, he thought it time to investigate the matter. Accordingly one Sunday night, when all the servants had gone out, he seated himself behind a screen in the kitchen, and waited for the apparition of the head. At length a tremulous motion was perceptible in the floor, and presently a head arose through a small opening, a pair of eyes belonging to it wandered cautiously around, and ascertained that the kitchen apparently was empty. And then the body belonging to the head was preparing to climb up, when the master of the house, springing forward and seizing with no gentle grasp the hands that rested on the sides of the opening in the floor, inflicted a greater fright on the apparition than it had done on the poor cook. It proved not to be a silent ghost, but begged for mercy like a mortal, and promised, if permitted to descend again in peace, and unmolested, to the lower regions, to tell nothing but the truth. The story of the owner of the black head and fiery eyes was simply that a gang of smugglers had long kept the house and

premises, which were convenient for the carrying on their trade, untenanted, by reporting that they were haunted; and, when it was re-occupied, had succeeded in reviving and obtaining credit to their old report, by a contrivance which enabled them from time to time to displace the furniture in the kitchen, and cause the pots and pans to play such fantastic tricks as made the servants weep with fright. The business on that evening, which had been so unexpectedly interrupted, was to upset the furniture, put the glass and china in strange spots, and create such confusion as might alarm the servants on their return, and tend to scare them from the place.

The Preventive men, however, as I have already remarked, have done much towards banishing many a long-cherished superstition. Often, in the last generation, from the windows of some uninhabited house—

“ A wond’rous blaze was seen to gleam :
T’was broader than the watch-fire’s light,
And redder than the bright moon-beam,”

and such lights were regarded as the tokens of coming woe. But the old folk, “Time’s doting chronicles,” will tell you in simplicity, “It’s a queer thing; but them lights, that were so common years ago, have seldom been seen of late years.” These supernatural lights, it is now well ascertained, were put up as signals to smuggling cutters, whose crews would understand by them whether it was safe to land their cargoes or not.

Of haunted houses we can boast a score; but, their nightly visitants being of the usual common-place description, I shall say no more about them, than that some are of the class of those unquiet spirits who return to earth in order to have the dark stain, supposed to have been left there by their blood, erased from some chamber floor, and upon which, you are assured, both soap and scrubbing-brush have been tried scores of times, and yet the tell-tale spots remain. Scott, in his amusing story (in the introduction to the second series of *Chronicles of the Canongate*) of the alarm of the old housekeeper at Holyrood, when the cockney agent of a great London house would have fetched out, in five minutes, with his scouring-drops, the stains of blood shed upon the floor on the night of Rizzio’s assassination, states his own opinion that, if blood be allowed to sink into wood, the stain becomes indelible

by anything but the carpenter's plane. But we know better than this in Sussex; for (79) I have been told of blood-stained boards being planed, and that in less than four-and-twenty hours the spots have always reappeared.

(80) A man of notoriously bad character, who lived in a lonely spot at the foot of our South Downs, without any companion of either sex, was believed to be nightly haunted by evil spirits in the form of rats. And an old woman told me, with a shudder, that persons passing near his cottage late at night had heard him cursing them, and desiring them to let him rest in peace. It was her belief, she said, that they were sent to do judgment on him, and would carry him away some night or other. But he was not to die the death of Bishop Hatto; for, whatever might have been the expectation of his neighbours, he received his death-blow in a drunken brawl.

(81) Numbers of our people believe in "the might of magic spell," and in the power of witches and wizards to work them ill, and to reveal to them the future events of their lives, and imagine that they have acquired this power and knowledge by selling themselves to the Evil One. They fear witchcraft, and have their remedies and preventives for it. There lived, till very lately, in a village near Chichester, a woman of indifferent character, who was never spoken of by the villagers by any other name than that of "the Witch." All appeared to dread her power, and every sudden misfortune that befell them was ascribed to her; but, instead of saying that they were bewitched, they used the very singular expression of being "sin-struck" by the witch. The groom of a gentleman* residing in the parish assured his master that there was no resisting her power, and added, "If she willed that I should sit across the roof of this stable from morning to night she'd have me up there in an instant, and nothing could bring me down till she gave me leave to come."

(82) In proof that a belief in witchcraft is still lingering in the west of Sussex, I may add the case of an assault, lately before a bench of magistrates,† in which the defendant declared that she should not have molested the plaintiff had she not found out that she was a witch. She had long had her suspicions how it was, and she had watched and

* Mr. Paxton, of Westdean, near Chichester.

† Reported to me by Major Sandham, J.P., who was present.

watched for an opportunity of setting her mind at ease about it, and at last she managed, unseen by her, to scratch her (the witch's) arm with a crooked pin she carried about with her for this purpose, and, when no blood came, then she up with her fist and gave it her well. On the magistrates' inquiring whether the plaintiff had ever molested her in any way, she replied that she had suspected her of doing her many an unkind turn, and that she now knew that she had come in at the key-hole when her child was in its cradle, and had thrown him into fits. The plaintiff was most unlike our old ideal image of a witch, being a remarkably tall, fat, rosy, good-tempered looking woman.

(83) Not many years ago a farmer residing on the western border of Sussex and Surrey seriously declared that the witches were in the habit of riding his horses by night, as they were often found by him in the morning covered with dirt and perspiration, and in a state of great exhaustion. This marvel, too, like many of our ghost stories, might probably be accounted for by the lawless practices of the gangs of smugglers, who took the liberty of borrowing the farmer's horses for the night-work of bringing up their kegs of brandy from the coast.

(84) There is a strong persuasion that certain persons have a supernatural and mysteriously acquired foreknowledge; and there is, I believe, still living in the parish of Bury a cunning woman, to whom young men and maidens resort, to inquire from her whether their presumptive husbands or wives will be short or tall, rich or poor, dark or fair, only a few months since I heard of three young girls, attired in their Sunday best, walking from a distant town to consult her.

(85) If you nail a horseshoe that you have picked up over your door it will prevent all witches and evil spirits crossing the threshold. I have seen several doors that can boast of this protecting talisman.

(86) An old woman in Tillington parish keeps, with religious care, a printed copy of the apocryphal epistle of our Lord to Abgarus, King of Edessa, which she bought from a travelling man (that is, a pedlar), who told her that if she stuck it up on her kitchen-wall, it would preserve her and her house from witchcraft and the evil eye.*

* This is a letter said to have been written by Christ in answer to an invitation from Abgarus, King of Edessa, to visit his city. See *The Apocryphal New Testament* (London: Printed for William Hone, Ludgate Hill, 1820).

My own household once exhibited an unquestionable proof of their disposition to believe in witchcraft. They declared that at a certain hour, on several successive nights, the back kitchen door had shaken violently, though no one was near it, and that the wooden latch had moved up and down; that they had looked out through the window, but not a human being was to be seen. One night the cook, the heroine of the party, had had the courage, while the latch was actually moving, to throw open the door, and what did she see? Nothing but darkness visible. They thought it must be witchcraft. But this was not to be endured; and a report of these mysterious doings being laid before the mistress of the house, and proper means resorted to to ascertain the cause of the disturbance, at length the author of it was detected, caught in the very act, and proved to be a cat, that used to sleep and have his supper set for him in the back kitchen, but, being of an erratic disposition, and having become a keeper of late hours, he returned home after the house was shut up, and attempted to get in by springing from the ground and catching, as he had been often seen to do, at the string that lifted up the latch. (87) Fortunate was it for the servants' peace of mind that it was not a strange cat that was discovered so employed, for in that case their worst suspicions must have been confirmed, since nothing would have induced them to believe that it was not a witch that had assumed the shape. The whiskered race are on the whole, however, more loved than feared by our Sussex peasantry—but there is a belief (88) that if left alone in the same room with an infant in a cradle they will creep in and suck its breath, a superstition probably derived from the old general belief in witchcraft. For the witch, who declared—

“ Under a cradle I did creep
By day; and, when the child was asleep
At night, I sucked the breath,”

had first taken upon her the form of a cat.

(89) Persons afflicted with epileptic fits are supposed to be bewitched, and a very extraordinary remedy is sometimes resorted to for their cure. A lady* of my acquaintance has told me the following curious story. She had observed, upon a cottage hearth, a quart bottle filled

* Mrs. Paxton of Westdean.

with pins; and, on inquiring why they were put there, was requested not to touch the bottle, as it was red hot, and because, if she did so, she would spoil the charm. "What charm?" she asked, in some surprise; "Why, ma'am," replied the woman, "it has pleased God to afflict my daughter here with falling-fits, and the doctors did her no good; so I was recommended to go to a wise woman, who lives on this side of Guildford, and she said, if she was well paid for it, she could tell me what ailed the girl, and what would cure her. So I said I was agreeable, and she told me that people afflicted with falling-fits were bewitched, and that I must get as many pins as would fill a quart bottle, and put them into it, and let it stand close to the fire, upon the hearth, till the pins were red hot; and, when that came about, they would prick the heart of the witch who had brought this affliction on my poor girl, and she would then be glad enough to take it off." I have learned from a medical gentleman* in this neighbourhood, that within his experience it was a very common thing for people in cases of long illness to ask the doctor who attended them if he did not think that they were suffering from the effects of the evil eye, or that they were bewitched. He told me, that, when a house in Pulborough was, a few years ago, undergoing a thorough repair, on removing the hearth-stone in one of the rooms, a bottle containing upwards of two hundred pins was found; every pin being bent, and some of them nearly in a curve. A gentleman present took up the bottle, and expressed his surprise at its being there, and at its contents, when the workmen told him that they often found them, and that they were deposited under the hearth-stone (with certain ceremonies, that, my informant said, were ludicrous, but unfit for him to relate) for the purpose of protecting the house against witchcraft. The superstitious custom which has been already mentioned of breaking through the bottom of an egg-shell after eating its contents as a preventive of witchcraft shows our lingering belief in it.†

There certainly is very little poetry or romance generally speaking in the Sussex folk-lore, but a belief of fairies and of fairy-land is still lingering amongst us. (90) Those singular circles in the grass known by the name of fairy-rings, "the green sour ringlets whereof

* Mr. Martin of Pulborough.

† See (23).

the ewe not bites" (*Tempest*, v. 1) are still believed to be caused by the feet of the fairies who have danced there in a round—unseen, unheard; and Dr. Wollaston's* less romantic theory, that they owe their origin to a certain kind of fungus, would find little favour. We still regard the beautiful red cup-moss as the fairies' baths. In days gone by the little good folk appear to have been extremely common in Sussex, for it has been observed† that many of our farms and closes seem to owe their names to their having been the reputed haunts of fairies—such as Pook-ryde (Folk-ryde), Pook-hole, Pook-croft, Pook-bourne, and to this list we may add Fay-gate, near Horsham. It is suggested by the same writer that the sharp end of the seed-vessel of the needle scandix (*S. pecten*), called here by the common people "the pook-needle," may have been regarded as belonging to the fairies. The common name in the west of Sussex for the puff-ball is "Puck's stool."

There is an unromantic fairy-tale told in our nurseries the scene of which is laid in West Sussex, how, once upon a time, two men stole a pig, and put it in a sack, and laid the sack down upon the ground just over a hole in which dwelt a fairy, who contrived to step into the sack in the form and in the place of the real grunter. The men were to take it in turns to carry the sack, and as one of them was toiling with his heavy load up a steep ascent he was startled to see a very little figure running close by his side, and asking, in a melancholy voice, "Dick, Dick, where be you?" and much was his alarm increased when a voice from the sack replied,

" In a sack,
Pick-a-back,
Riding up Beeding Hill."

The frightened men of course threw down the sack and ran away, and the good fairy resumed his own form and returned to his home by the pigsty, rejoicing that he had saved the pig from the thieves, it being the property of a man for whom the fairies had a liking.

* *Phil. Trans.* 1807, pt. 2.

† By Mr. Blencowe, *Sussex Archæol. Coll.* iii. p. 124.

(91) I have often heard our cook repeating over her churn, when the butter was slow in forming :

“ Come, butter, come,
Come, butter, come,
Peter stands at the gate,
Waiting for a buttered cake,
Come, butter, come !”*

And this charm she repeated three times, in order that it might oblige the witch, who had affected the cream, and, like Robin Goodfellow, “bootless made the breathless housewife churn,” to run away, and at the same time bring the good fairies to her assistance.

(92) There is a tradition in the parish of Pulborough of a fairy’s funeral, and the very place of burial is pointed out to you. It is at the top of a green mound, known by the name of the Mount,† and it would be hard to find a more fitting spot for such a funeral train to assemble at. But the favourite Sussex fairy tale in the days of my youth was one which cannot but remind us of the story told upon the evening of the “sun-shine holiday” in *L’Allegro*, how the drudging goblin swet,—

“ When in one night, ere glimpse of morn,
His shadowing flail hath threshed the corn.”

(93) A farmer at Washington, who had been often surprised, on going into his barn early in the morning, to see large heaps of corn that had been threshed during the night, determined at last to sit up, and discover, if possible, who the kind friends were who worked so hard and well for him whilst he was taking his rest. So creeping to the barn-door, and looking through a chink in it, he was astonished at seeing two little fairies working away with their fairy flails, and only stopping for an instant, now and then, to say to each other, “See how I sweat! See how I sweat!” the very consequence of the


* In *A Candle in the Dark* by Thomas Ady, published in 1655, he states that he was told this charm by an old witch ; she declared that her grandmother had learnt it in the days of Queen Mary.

† See (64).

labour of the "lubbar fiend" in Milton. The farmer in his delight, forgetting that fairies are offended if a mortal speaks to them, cried out, with a loud laugh, "Well done, my little men;" and instantly (the story says) the little men uttered a wild cry and disappeared, and never more were known to resume their work in that barn.

CHAPTER IV.

OMENS AND PRESAGES ASSOCIATED WITH LOVE AND MARRIAGE.

HOULD a girl wish to ascertain what will be the personal appearance of her future husband, she must sit across a gate or stile and look steadfastly at the first new moon that rises after New Year's day. She must go alone and must not have confided her intention of doing so to any one, and when the moon appears it is thus apostrophized—

“All hail to thee, moon ! All hail to thee !
I pray thee, good moon, reveal to me
This night who my husband must be.”

I know no recent instance of this charm being tried, but I hear that the new January moon is still watched by our Sussex maidens, who, shivering with cold and fear, see the likeness of the future husband come—

“Up the house stalking
And the vera grey breeks o' Tam Glen !”

We can indeed boast of almost as many sure experiments for ascertaining our fate in love and marriage as the Scotch, and two of them are practised on the eve of the 31st of October, our Hallowe'en, a night on which monie lads' and lasses' fates are decided. I have been sometimes asked for nuts and apples, in order that these charms might be tried. (95) The nuts are placed in a bright fire side by side, the one of them belonging to a youth, the other to a maiden, who, after thinking of the loved name, repeat to themselves these words, varying the pronoun according to sex,—

“If he loves me, pop and fly,
If he hates me, lie and die.”

Anxious faces are seen round the hearth, while the owners of the nuts are listening eagerly for the hoped-for pop, and great is the dismay of the proprietor of that which dies and makes no sign.

(96) The apple charm is very simple, consisting merely in every person present fastening an apple on a string, hung and twirled round before a hot fire. The owner of the apple that first falls off is declared to be upon the point of marriage; and as they fall successively, the order in which the rest of the party will attain to matrimonial honours is clearly indicated; single blessedness being the lot of the one whose apple is the last to drop. It will be remembered that the burning nuts and roasting apples are amongst the Scottish spells of Burns's *Hallowe'en*, and it may be noted with regard to the nuts that we in Sussex interpret the sign diversely, for in Scotland a silent burning forebodes a smooth course and happy issue of the courtship, whilst the contrary may be looked for if the nuts "start awa' with saucy pride."

(97) Our custom of cutting the common brake or fern just above the root to ascertain the initial letters of the future wife's or husband's name bears some resemblance to the pulling up of the nail-plant in Scotland, the first ceremony of *Hallowe'en*.

(98) There is an experimental spell which I have tried sometimes in my youth in Sussex. A ring, or piece of money, is suspended by a thread or hair, and held as steadily as may be within a glass. The belief is, that when it begins to oscillate it will strike the number of years that are to pass before the holder of the thread is married.

(99) A spell less pardonable than these is sometimes resorted to in order to ascertain which of two persons will first be married. A key is fastened with a string within the pages of a small Bible, the ring of the key protruding from it, by which ring the book is to be suspended from a finger of each of the two young people who are trying their matrimonial fate. They stand as motionless as possible and repeat a verse from the Bible, usually the 16th of the first chapter of *Ruth*—"Intreat me not to leave thee," &c. After waiting a short time the fingers of course move imperceptibly, and the book turning slowly round presents a corner to one of the holders of the key, who is pronounced by the lookers-on to be the favoured one. I have heard even well-educated persons confess, not quite without a dash of superstitious belief, to having borne part in this strange ceremony.

(100) There is a charm used in Sussex, which is also a Devonshire superstition, for discovering your real sweetheart. Pluck the yarrow (*millefolium*, or nose-bleed) growing on a young man's grave, repeating, as you do so, the words following—(they are the Devonshire lines, but our own, which I have not copied, are almost identical)—

“ Yarrow, sweet yarrow, the first that I have found,
In the name of Jesus Christ, I pluck it from the ground ;
As Joseph loved sweet Mary, and took her for his dear,
So in a dream this night, I hope, my true love will appear,”

and then go to sleep, with the yarrow under your pillow.

(101) Fortunes matrimonial are often told by seers at home from the grounds or sediment remaining at the bottom of a tea-cup ; and where to unenlightened eyes nothing is apparent but a little black dust floating in a slop, we are assured that those who have the wit to do so may discern a meaning.

(102) I have known a learned woman confidently foretell the future lot in matrimony of all her fellow-servants with a pack of cards. The cards were dealt round by her into heaps, with much mystical calculation, and the fortunate maiden who found the ace of diamonds in her heap was to marry a rich man ; but she who found the knave of clubs or spades would have nothing but poverty and misery in her wedded state. The king of diamonds or of hearts pointed out to the possessor that her partner for life would be a fair man, while the holding of the king of clubs or spades gave warning that he would be dark. It is not quite so obvious why the possession of the knaves of hearts or diamonds showed that you had an unknown enemy.

(103) Matrimonial and other fortunes are also told by the white marks on the finger-nails. The seers commence with the thumb, and say “a gift,” and judge of its probable size by that of the mark ; they then touch the forefinger, and add “a friend,” and gravely tell you, should they find a spot upon the nail of the middle finger, that you have an enemy somewhere. It is the presence or the absence of such a mark on the third finger that proves your future good or ill success in love ; one on the little finger warns you that you will soon have to go a journey.

(104) A bride, on her return from church, is often robbed of all the pins about her dress by the single women present, from the belief that whoever possesses one of them will be married in the course of a year. (105) But a yellow, crooked pin must on no account be picked up, or the tidy person who removes it from the floor will die an old maid. Often have I heard the warning given, not to touch "the nasty thing."

(106) If bees make their nest in the roof of a house, none of the daughters born in that dwelling will marry.

(107) It is some time since I last heard of any young persons seeking to ascertain their matrimonial fate by sowing hemp-seed: but the old superstition still maintains its place in popular belief. The stout-hearted maiden must steal out alone to the church-yard, and sow a handful of hemp-seed, and pretend to harrow it with anything she can drag after her, saying—

"Hemp-seed, I sow thee,
Hemp-seed, I sow thee;
And he that is my true love
Come after me and mow thee!"

and then she is to look over her left shoulder, and she will see a man mowing as he follows her. There are, however, only certain days in the year when the charm will take effect: one, if I remember right, is Midsummer, or St. John's Eve, on which our ancestors used to practise so many superstitious observances; dancing around fires, crowned with garlands, and leaping over them "with words devout and prayers, whereby they think, through all that year, from agues to be free."

We no longer light our bonfires on the eve of good St. John in Sussex, but some of the old superstitious feelings with respect to it still linger amongst us; and simple maidens have confessed in my hearing to their having (108), just before midnight, washed their sarks, and hung them out to dry before the kitchen fire, and waited to see who would come in and turn them. The kitchen door must be set wide open, or the charm will not work. In one case, I was informed, a very tall man in black came in, and turned the sark, and then slowly walked away again. This is another Sussex superstition,

almost the same with one in Burns's *Hallowe'en*, where we are told of the fright the widow Leezie got, who went to—

“Where three lairds' lands met at a burn,
To dip her left sark sleeve in;”

how she plumpit in the pool, when—

“The deil, or else an outler quey,*
Gat up and gie a croon;”

and prevented her finishing her spell.

* An unhoused heifer.

CHAPTER V.

CHARMS AND OBSERVATIONS BELIEVED TO BE EFFECTUAL FOR THE
CURE OR THE AVOIDANCE OF DIFFERENT AILMENTS.

ALTHOUGH charms are no longer universally regarded as infallible cures, there are thousands amongst our rural population who still place more faith in them than in the skill of the doctor. A singular proof of this fact came under my observation a short time since, and in truth first led me to inquire into the existence of other popular superstitions.

(109) A poor woman in the village where I live had been very seriously scalded, and was in great suffering when I visited her; but still resolutely refused to let me send for the parish surgeon or apply any remedy whatsoever. Some days after I discovered that she had no faith in any other cure for a burn than a certain word-charm; and that the charm, to be quite efficacious, must be repeated over it on a Sunday evening. She therefore remained in great pain till Sunday arrived, and then sent for an old woman, who (as an eye-witness informed me) "bowed her head over the wound, crossed two of her fingers over it, and, after repeating some words to herself, huffed, or breathed quickly, on it." I was anxious to obtain this word-charm; but was told that persons who were so fortunate as to possess it kept it secret; at length I induced a noted charmer to repeat it to me, after she had assured me more than once that there was no harm in using it, for it was only a blessing, and had nothing to do with witchcraft. It is given verbatim, as I wrote it down at the time I heard it:

"There came two Angels from the North,
One was Fire, and one was Frost.
Out Fire : in Frost,
In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost."

The discovery of this singular cure for a burn induced me to search for other charms of a similar nature, that I soon found were held in

high repute in the village. I accordingly paid a visit to an ancient dame who kept a small day-school, and was also a celebrated compounder of ointments, a collector of simples, and said to be a charmer of wounds caused by thorns. She assured me that many people came to her with bad wounds, and got her "to say her blessing over them; and a power of people she had cured with it in the course of her life." It was only four lines, and, as I seemed curious about them, she did not mind repeating them to me. (110) And then, holding up one of her fingers, and looking as earnestly at it as she could have done had there been a thorn to be charmed out of it, she said in a grave and mysterious tone,—

" Our Saviour Christ was of a pure virgin born,
And He was crowned with a thorn;
I hope it may not rage nor swell;
I trust in God it may do well."

Once induced to confess that she was a dealer in charms, the old dame became communicative on the subject, and told me that she had inherited from her mother a charm for the bite of a viper, and another that cured giddiness in cattle; but that, in moving from the upper part of the village to the lower, she had had the misfortune to lose them both. In her time, however, she had worked surprising cures with them, and it often was a comfort to her to remember that, though silver and gold had she none, she had been able to do some good by her blessings: for which she never made any charge. When she was a young girl just going out to service, those for a burn and a thorn wound had been taught her by an old shepherd, who lodged with her mother, and who thought they might put a little money in her pocket. There was an old man, she went on to say, who lived out by Midhurst, noted for the cure of burns by a word-charm. He said the Lord's prayer over them, with his fingers crossed over the burn; and, after blowing upon it, said: "In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, I hope it may do well;" and she named numerous cases in which the raging heat had instantly ceased, and the burn been cured by this blessing, after the doctor's stuff had been tried in vain.

(111) Much did she grieve over the loss of her viper charm; it had done such a power of good. She had tried it once on a lad who had been stung by a viper coiled up in a bird's nest, into which he put his hand. His arm went on to rage and swell, till it was as big round as her body, and a power of doctors came to see him, but they could do him no good. So she watched her opportunity, and went up stairs one day when she knew he was quite alone, and said her blessing over his arm, "and he was soon quite hearty again." "And since he has been a man grown," she exclaimed in a tone of exultation, "hasn't he been to see me, and didn't he say, you are the best friend I ever had, for I should not be here now but for your viper blessing?" (112) A farmer too, she went on to tell me, had come from a distance to beg her to save the life of a valuable cow that was taken suddenly ill, and she said her blessing for it, and before the farmer got home the cow was well again. Such is the value attached to these charms by the possessors of them, that an old man who died in our parish almshouse taught a poor woman who had waited on him during his last illness, in gratitude, and as he believed in full requital for her kindness to him, a charm infallible for a burn.

There are so few of all the ills that flesh is heir to for which some wise woman in West Sussex is not furnished with a cure, that one might suppose the office of the village doctor had become a sinecure, and, lest their traditionary recipes should die with the possessors, I have noted down from time to time such as I have heard prescribed. For our doctresses are a race that is diminishing, and few of them are better acquainted with pen, ink, and paper, than Shakspeare's old hermit of Prague, though one at least must be excepted, who, when I wanted to obtain from her some of the old word-charms which I knew her to be in the habit of using, said to me, "I promised the man who taught me them, by all that's good and great, never to *tell* them to any one, but I did not say I would not *write them down*, and I have done so, and they will be found after my death, for I should like to know I have done some good to my neighbours after I am gone."

It would perhaps be difficult to produce a more convincing proof of the hold that superstition still retains upon the minds of thousands than the following catalogue,

At the head of my collection I set down in the terms dictated to me a few weeks since, by the head nurse in a family, two cures for the whooping-cough. (113) "Hang round the neck of the patient a silk bag filled with hair cut from the cross on the neck of a donkey; borrow the donkey; place the patient on its back, with his or her face looking towards its tail, and lead it to a certain spot fixed on in your own mind, three times running, for three succeeding days." The nurse assured me that this remedy had been tried on herself and her brother with eminent success; and that the hair was sewn up in the bags by the wife of the Clergyman, who had also lent the donkey on which they took their rides. (114) The second remedy, though of a much more simple kind, had worked no end of cures, "Hang round the patient's neck the excrescence often found upon the briar-rose, and called here in Sussex by the name of Robin Redbreast's Cushion; it is the finest thing known for the whooping-cough;" and I recollect a growth of this kind of unusual size being given to a little girl who had the whooping-cough, as a plaything. On seeing it, the nurse exclaimed, "I am glad to see that, I have been hunting for one for several days to hang round Miss Mary's neck."

(115) We have another infallible remedy for whooping-cough in whatever may be prescribed by the rider of a piebald horse. A man who was the owner of one lived a few years ago at Petworth, and never rode out on it without being accosted by some mother of a family, and solicited to tell her the best cure for whooping-cough. Sometimes he would reply "Ale and butter," sometimes "Honey and vinegar," in short, any strange compound that first occurred to him. But however strange might be the advice, it was always implicitly followed, and, said Mrs. Cooper, my informant, "the result has always been the same—the sick children were cured."

I believe that modern science has failed to discover the medicinal properties of vervain, (116) but its dried leaves, "worn in a black silk bag," are recommended as a cure for weakly children. A belief in the virtues of this insignificant plant is as old as the days of Druidism, when it was regarded as the cure for many ills, and as a fit offering to their gods.

For rheumatism, a malady so prevalent amongst the poor, there are

many remedies ; but I will only mention a few. One is pre-eminently absurd. (117) A clergyman, H— W—, told me a short time since that, finding an infirm old woman seated on the very edge of her chair, he expressed to her his fear that she would slip off ; but she assured him that she was quite safe, and that she was sitting in that way in order to make room for the bellows behind her in the chair, as the leaning against them was “a fine thing for the rheumatis,” not as might have been conjectured from the support afforded to her back, but because they would, as she believed, so placed charm away the malady.

(118) Another old woman said she couldn't no way understand her rheumatis being so uncommon bad, for she had put her shoes in the form of a cross every night by the side of her bed, ever since she felt the first twinge.

(119) The right fore-foot of a hare worn constantly in the pocket is considered a fine thing for rheumatism, but my old dame Mrs. Cooper's infallible remedy for it is, (120) “find an elder stick with three, five, or seven knots upon it; carry it in your pocket.”

(121) For ague, the same authority prescribes “eat fasting seven sage-leaves seven mornings running.” (122) Our coachman's daughter was advised to cure her ague by putting a caterpillar into a box and carrying it in her pocket, with the assurance that, as the caterpillar wasted away, her ague-fits would decrease. We have had several ague cases this spring, and one poor girl who had been ill for many weeks, on being asked the other morning how she felt, replied, “Better already, I thank you; I have been trying Mrs. Cooper's cure and it has done me good. She said it was a very innocent thing, and had cured many people that the doctor could do nothing for ; it was only (123) to wear a leaf of tansey in my shoes ; or, if I preferred it, I might eat two sage-leaves of a morning fasting for nine mornings.”

(124) Sometimes we may observe a silver ring on the wedding-ring finger of a single woman ; they are worn for the cure of fits, and are made out of six sixpences which have been begged from six young bachelors. I know that a young woman in a neighbouring village has long worn one of these magic rings, which will ward off all common fits, if worn with faith.

(125) I have heard that a paw cut off from a live mole is good for toothache, and (126) one of my grandchildren who has been suffering from that malady has been recommended by her nurse to hunt for a double hazel-nut, and to carry it in her pocket, and then she will never be troubled again in the same way. From many other remedies for the agony I have selected the following, which is copied *verbatim et literatim* from the fly-leaf of a *Book of Common Prayer* lately belonging to a Sussex labourer and now in my possession.

(127) "As Peter sat weeping on a marvel stone, Christ came by and said unto him, Peter, what hailest thou—Peter answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God, my tooth eaketh. Jesus said unto him, Arise, Peter, and be thou hole; and not the only but all them that carry these lines for my sake, shall never have the tooth ake. Joseph Hylands his book."

The belief is that the possession of a Bible or a Prayer Book with this legend written in it is a charm against tooth-ache! We speak with compassion of the African Negro and Kaffir, who carry about charms written on slips of paper to avert or cure some bodily disease, perhaps little imagining, till accident reveals the painful fact, that thousands in our civilized England are practising observances more grossly superstitious, and believing just as firmly in their efficacy.

There cannot, I think, be produced a more convincing proof of this sad truth than the following remedy, still in common use both here and in many parts of Sussex, for the cure of rupture in children: (128) A child so afflicted must be passed nine times every morning on nine successive days at sunrise through a cleft in a sapling ash-tree, which has been so far given up by the owner of it to the parents of the child, as that there is an understanding it shall not be cut down during the life of the infant who is to be passed through it. The sapling must be sound at heart, and the cleft must be made with an axe. The child on being carried to the tree must be attended by nine persons, each of whom must pass it through the cleft from west to east. On the ninth morning the solemn ceremony is concluded by binding the tree lightly with a cord, and it is supposed that as the cleft closes the health of the child will improve. In the neighbour-

hood of Petworth some cleft ash-trees may be seen, through which children have very recently been passed. I may add, that only a few weeks since, a person who had lately purchased an ash-tree standing in this parish, intending to cut it down, was told by the father of a child, who had some time before been passed through it, that the infirmity would be sure to return upon his son if it were felled. Whereupon the good man said, he knew that such would be the case; and therefore he would not fell it for the world.

(129) In the cure of warts, again the ash-tree has its part; persons annoyed with those unsightly excrescences, after pricking them with a number of pins, stick the pins into an ash-tree, and believe that, as they become embedded in the growing bark, the warts will gradually disappear. (130) Many, however, instead of this charm, recommend the stealing of a small piece of meat and burying it in some road-side bank, and then as the meat decays so likewise will the warts; but on no account must the spot where the meat is hid be revealed to any one, or it will spoil the charm. (131) One old woman tells me that she “holds more to the simple peeling of a stick and burying it in muck.” And, to justify her preference of this last popular superstition, it is quite certain that it may be carried back as far as to the time of Lord Bacon, who is, perhaps, too hastily asserted to have been a believer himself in the efficacy of the cure of warts by sympathy.*

* In that collection of strange facts worth inquiring into, and of being submitted to the test of experience and observation, which Lord Bacon calls his *Natural History*, No. 997, on the subject of what are termed sympathies and antipathies, it is recorded that “the taking away of warts by rubbing them with somewhat that afterwards is put to waste and consume is a common experiment, and I do apprehend it the rather because of my own experience. I had from my childhood a wart on one of my fingers; afterwards, when I was about sixteen years old, being then at Paris, there grew upon both my hands a number of warts—at the least an hundred, in a month’s space. The English Ambassador’s lady, who was a woman far from superstition, told me one day she would help me away with my warts: whereupon she got a piece of lard with the skin on, and rubbed the warts all over with the fat side; and, amongst the rest, that wart which I had had from my childhood: then she nailed the piece of lard, with the fat towards the sun, upon a post of her chamber window, which was towards the south. The success was, that within five weeks’ space all the warts went quite away: and that wart which I had so long endured for company. But at the rest I did little marvel, because they came in a short time and might go away in a

(132) But the most singular superstition connected with the ash is the once very popular belief, not yet extinct, that the burying a shrew-mouse alive, with sundry ceremonies, in a hole bored in it, would remedy the supposed evils inflicted by the shrew on man or beast. How so perfectly harmless an animal came to be regarded with as much horror as the most venomous of reptiles I never heard explained. But the antipathy to it has been bequeathed to us, and to this day the country people in West Sussex speak of it as a thing of evil omen; they believe (133) that it cannot attempt to pass a foot-path, or high road, without dying; and (134) talk of the injury it does to cattle, by creeping over them when they are asleep. (135) Within the memory of those living, the leaves or twigs of the "shrew-ash" have been employed to cure the injured cattle. I heard, but a few days ago, of a farmer, who found a valuable horse that had been turned over night into a meadow quite lame in the morning, uttering curses deep against those horrid "pick-nosed mice" (the name by which the shrew-mouse is known in Western Sussex), for having caused all the mischief to the injured limb. "Don't turn those cows into that meadow," said another farmer lately to a new servant, "or some harm will come to them, for the field's full of those picked-nosed mice." Traditional tales are told of the shrew-mouse tree in many parts of England; and, when the well-meaning vicar of Selborne (as White tells us, vol. i. pp. 355, 356), against the strong remonstrances of the by-standers, destroyed one that had long stood close to the parsonage, he vainly flattered himself that by rooting up the tree he should root out of the minds of his parishioners the superstitious belief in its virtues.

But the ash is not the only plant of power against the shrew. Drayton tells us that a bramble, "which at both ends was rooted deep," was in magic much availing; (136) through such a bramble

short time again: but the going away of that which had stayed so long doth yet stick with me. They say the like is done by the rubbing of warts with a green alder stick, and then burying the stick to rot in muck." Lord Bacon does not however say that either of these two extraordinary facts had been established on sufficient evidence, but that they were worth inquiring into by further observation as strange and questionable instances of asserted sympathy.

cattle are still drawn, to cure them of the ills brought on them by the creeping of the shrew-mouse over them; and I am told (137) that children disfigured by eruptions are cured by passing them nine times through, on nine successive mornings, at the rising of the sun.

Further virtues are superstitiously ascribed to the ash, the tree of which Spenser speaks as being "for nothing ill." It is, however, singular, that the same superstition which looks upon the ash as possessing such supernatural powers of healing, regards it (138) as an especial attraction of lightning, to be avoided in a thunder-storm; and mothers teach their children to say—

"Beware of an oak,
It draws the stroke;
Avoid an ash,
It courts the flash;
Creep under the thorn,
It can save you from harm."

(139) Another tree, the maple, although "seldom inward sound" itself, is supposed to be capable of bestowing long life on children who have passed through its branches. One of these length-of-days-bestowing maples had been long resorted to in West Grinstead Park; and when a rumour spread through the parish, a few years ago, that it was about to be cut down, humble petitions were presented that it might be spared.

But we must return to our mysterious pharmacy. (140) For the benefit of persons blessed with a good digestion, there is the recipe of our old village clerk for hydrophobia, "a slice of the liver of the dog that bit you, to be boiled and eaten."

(141) An approved remedy for wounds inflicted with a sharp instrument (akin to wise Sir Kenelm Digby's sympathetic cure by the anointing of the weapon that made the wound)* is to keep it polished and bright until the injured part is healed. Several instances of the trial of this old superstitious remedy have come under my observation; but the most remarkable one occurred in the house of an acquaintance, one of whose men had fallen down upon a sword-stick and inflicted a serious wound on his back, which confined him to his bed for several

* See also Bacon's *Natural History*, No. 998.

days. During the whole of this time the sword-stick was hung up at his bed's head, and polished night and day at stated intervals by a female hand, and was anxiously examined lest a single spot of rust should be found there, as that would have been a token that the wounded man would die.

(142) Though I have no charm to cure headache on my list, agreeing with the old proverb that to prevent it is still better, I shall state a sure way of avoiding it in the spring. No hair either cut or combed from your head must be allowed to be thrown carelessly away, lest some bird should find it and carry it off, in which case your head would ache during all the time that the bird was busy working the spoil into its nest. "I knew how it would be," exclaimed a servant to me one day, "when I saw that bird fly off with a bit of my hair in its beak that blew out of the window this morning when I was dressing; I knew I should have a clapping headache, and so I have."

(143) The same young woman remonstrated strongly against the throwing away of the cast teeth of children, affirming that, should they be found, and gnawed by any animal, the child's new tooth would be, for all the world, like the animal's that had bitten the old one. In proof of her assertion she named old Master Simmons, who had a very large pig's tooth in his upper jaw, a personal blemish that he always had averred was caused by his mother's having thrown one of his cast teeth away by accident in the hog-trough.

(144) If babies fret and do not appear to thrive, it is supposed that they are "longing." "Baby," said a nurse to me, "is so uncommon fretty, I do believe he must be longing for something." And to the question, What could he be longing for? the reply was, "Something that his mother longed for, but did not get, before he was born, and the best way to satisfy him would be, I think, to try him with a brandy cherry, or some hare's brains." (145) Or Baptism is looked forward to as a cure for fretfulness; and I have known a young mother to say of her baby, "Poor thing, it is very fretty, but I think it will be all right again after it is christened."

(146) A necklace made of beads turned from the root of the peony is worn by children to prevent convulsions, and to aid dentition.

(147) The old traditionary word-charm for the hiccough, perhaps, hardly ought to be inserted in a list of superstitions, for most of us

have ourselves proved its efficacy in our younger days. But the peculiarity of its application by my nurse, with whom it was a great favourite, was her requiring it to be said "thrice in one breath, or else the charm would fail:"

"Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled pepper,
A peck of pickled pepper Peter Piper picked, &c., &c."

(148) The application of a dock-leaf, with a certain form of words addressed to it, is supposed to cure nettle-stings.

(149) Another popular belief common to all classes is, that the humour on the eyelid called a "sty" can be cured by rubbing it three times with a plain gold ring; an operation I have frequently submitted to in my youth. The beneficial effect of gold upon a sty is alluded to by Beaumont and Fletcher in *The Mad Lover*, Act v.

(150) For the weakness of my eyes I have been assured that the best application would be the water that is found in the hollow cup of the teasel: and (151) a superstition lingering amongst us, worthy of the days of paganism, is, that the new May moon, aided by certain charms, has the power of curing scrofulous complaints. A man living in the neighbourhood of Chichester, whose children and grandchildren are much afflicted, has twice taken a journey of upwards of a hundred miles, with different members of his family, to visit a cunning man in Dorsetshire, who professes to be in possession of the charms. The month of May is the only month when they will work, and the sufferers, to derive any benefit therefrom, must have their eyes fixed on the new moon at the time when they are presented with a box of ointment made from herbs gathered when the moon was full. The poor man said that on his last visit to get a grandchild cured he found upwards of two hundred persons waiting to be charmed, and, as the new moon was not expected to rise before two o'clock, they sat up all night for fear of missing the right moment for looking at her. (152) Another sufferer at North Chapel was recommended to wear a live toad round his neck till it was dead; he has done so, and declares he feels the better for the inhuman remedy.

(153) For bad cases of jaundice many an old doctress still prescribes "a live spider rolled up in butter."

(154) Some of the sacramental wine that may remain unconsumed after consecration is regarded as a cure for debility in infancy and in extreme old age. A request came to me a short time since from a farmer's wife to endeavour to procure a little for her. The messenger, who was one of her daughters, said, "Mother thinks, as she has tried everything else that she can hear of, and it has done the baby no good, that a little of the sacramental wine might save it." Wisely has it been ordered, for the prevention of all such abuses, that no part of the consecrated elements shall ever be reserved after the Communion is ended, or ever carried out of the church. It is by no means an uncommon thing, amongst the poorer classes, to receive the Holy Communion, when they feel very ill, from a belief they entertain that relief may be afforded to their bodily ailments by partaking of it; or even, as it would seem, by the good intention of so doing. A remarkable instance of this came under my observation. An old woman, in reply to an inquiry as to her health, said, "I think I am a deal better than when I last saw you. On Sunday there was a Sacrament; and says I to my next-door neighbour, 'As we are both going to have a cold dinner to-day, what do you say to our going to church, and staying the Sacrament?' and she said she was agreeable, but somehow we dawdled about till it was too late. But ever since I thought of going to the Sacrament I have not found near so much of the pain in my stomach."

(155) Persons who have been confirmed in their youth sometimes again present themselves for Confirmation in their old age, because they think the Bishop's blessing will cure them of some bodily ailment. I have heard of an old woman who was confirmed several times, because she thought it was good for her rheumatism, and a feeling of the same kind prevails when a poor woman tells you, (156) "I feel very weak and teary after my confinement, but I dare say I shall get up my strength after I have been churched." I have already mentioned the belief that fretfulness in infants will be cured by baptism.*

(157) The following strange superstition also has in it a religious

* See (145).

element. I knew a mother who refused the medicine offered to her for her child ill of the ague, because she had no faith in anything but passing it three times under the belly of an ass. Being pressed to give a reason for her faith, after some hesitation she replied, "Why, it is something about our Saviour's riding on an ass into Jerusalem; and about the cross that wasn't on the ass's back before, and has been there ever since that time."

(158) One day I called upon the village doctress, who is possessed of so many wondrous receipts, when, our conversation turning on the ailment called the thrush, she struck her knees emphatically with both hands, and said, "I know the simplest remedy for that complaint, but people are so stupid. I often cannot get them to try it, and yet I have cured many by it in my time. When we were living under the hill, Master Hawkins came to me one day, and, says he, 'My baby is uncommon bad with its mouth.' 'It has got the thrush,' says I, 'and I'll just step back with you to tell your wife what she must do.' Well, when I saw the child, I thought this is as bad a case of thrush as ever I set eyes on. So says I to the child's mother, 'Do you know of a left twin girl anywhere here about?' She thought a minute, and then said, 'Yes, my cousin Eliza at the shop is a left twin.' 'Good,' says I, 'take the boy down to her, and ask her to blow into his mouth, and then to stop a minute; then to blow again, and stop a minute; and then blow for the third time, and the child will have no remains of the thrush to-morrow.' So, when she took it down, old Uncle Collins said, he did not see how any good could come of such a thing; but when he heard that I had ordered it he bade his daughter blow away, and so she did, and wasn't that poor suffering baby cured!" I asked her what was meant by a left twin, and what effect the blowing possibly could have upon such a complaint? She replied, the child that has outlived its fellow-twin is always called a left twin, and in such cases it's faith that works the cure. She could tell me, she said, of many that had been so cured, and mentioned a young woman, "wife of the man who keeps the inn upon the heath, who had the black thrush so bad that she could neither eat nor drink, but a young man, who was a left twin, came and blew in her mouth three times, and the thrush left her. "You see," she added, "it must be one of the male

sex that blows into the mouth of a woman, and a female into that of a man."

(159) A revolting remedy is still resorted to for the cure of wens or *goître* in the throat—passing the hand of a corpse several times over the swollen part. The hand of a defunct felon was formerly regarded as most efficacious in such a case.

Some five-and-thirty years ago there stood a gibbet within sight of the high road that wound up Beeding Hill, our nearest way to Brighton. Standing on the wide desolate down, with all its fearful associations, it was an object of great terror to me in my youthful days; and the dread of seeing it and hearing my nurse repeat her oft-told tale of the murderer who had been hung on it in chains, and how he had been seen swinging on a windy night and heard rattling his irons, made the prospect of a visit to the sea-side, which involved the sight of the gallows anything but pleasurable. Amongst my nurse's fearful stories there was one relating (160) to the curing of a wen by the touch of the dead murderer's hand. She actually knew some one who knew the woman who had been touched with it; and she described most graphically the whole frightful scene, how the woman was taken under the gallows in a cart and was held up in order that she might touch the dead hand, and how she passed it three times over the wen and then returned homeward. This superstitious practice happily expired with the abolition of the gibbet; but the remedy of the dead hand is still sometimes resorted to. Not very long ago, in the neighbouring village of Storrington, a young woman afflicted with a *goître* was taken by her friends to the side of an open coffin in order that the hand of the corpse might touch it twice. Mrs. Charles Standen of this place, who has for some years had an enlarged throat, on hearing that a boy was drowned in Waltham Lock, set off immediately and had the part affected stroked with the dead hand nine times from east to west, and the same number of times from west to east.

(161) The belief that a sick person who grows thin in spite of a ravenous appetite has a snake or (as it is called) a nanny-wiper in the stomach, lingers still amongst us; and I very lately heard the illness of a poor woman who has been out of health for the last two years ascribed to this cause by her next-door neighbour. She said that the

woman was always hungry, but that nothing she ate or drank did her a bit of good, for the nanny-wiper took it all. The snake is supposed to be very fond of milk, and I was gravely told that a cousin of hers who was tormented by one held some milk for a time in her mouth, and at last the snake "came quite up in her throat after it," and that the only way was, to set some warm milk on a table in a saucer, and, pretending to go to sleep, to sit with your mouth wide open, and, when the nanny-wiper came out to drink, for somebody to knock it on the head.

(162) I have been told that nine mice roasted to a cinder, then powdered till they are as fine as dust, and swallowed fasting in a glass of ale, are a fine thing for some particular cases of debility. My informant had however tried it on her own son, and she confessed that it had failed.

I have a note of two other superstitions of the remediate class which I have hesitated to put on my list ; but, after all, I think they are too curious to be left unrecorded. When a poor child has in vain been whipped and scolded for the nightly repetition of a certain involuntary offence, in the last resort one of the two following remedies may be tried: (163) Upon the day appointed for the funeral of a person not of the same sex as the child, while the first part of the burial office is being read within the church, the child is to be taken to the open grave and is there to do that which constituted the original offence. My informant told me that, although she had taken her own little boy to the churchyard, he had not had the courage to carry out this first remedy, and so she tried the second with complete success. (164) It consists in the child's first going alone to fix upon an ash-tree suitable for the purposes of the charm, and going afterwards upon another day, without divulging its intention, to gather a handful of the ash-keys, which it must lay with the left hand in the hollow of the right arm. Thus are they to be carried home and then they are to be burnt to ashes. The charm is completed by the child performing the same ceremony over the embers on the hearth, which in the former remedy it was to go through at the open grave.

(165) I conclude this chapter by mentioning a preventive of the plague of fleas, though there may be some difficulty in its application,

as there is unfortunately a material variation between my two authorities on a most essential point. "If you wish to keep fleas out of your house," says Elizabeth Hinds, my daughter's nurse, "you must be up before the sun on the 1st of March, and, throwing open a window, say, 'Good morning, March.'" But Mrs. Webb, the monthly nurse, says on the contrary, "If from fleas you would be free, on the 1st of March let all your windows closed be." She added, however, that she had tried it, but it had not altogether answered—a few crept in.

CHAPTER VI.

PROGNOSTICS OF DEATH—SICK-ROOM AND DEATH-BED
SUPERSTITIONS.

FROM this long detail of the extraordinary remedies to which we trust in Western Sussex for curing almost all diseases that our flesh is heir to, we may pass, not inappropriately, to the prognostics of approaching death and other ghostly presages.

Death-tokens are very numerous. (166) An unusual rattling of the church-door portends that before the end of the week it will be open to receive a corpse. (167) Another early burial is foretold from the heavy sound of the funeral bell. When I observed one morning to a servant that we were to have another funeral this week, "I am not surprised to hear it," was her reply; "I told Jane, the day of old Master Smith's burial, that I knew from the sound of the bell that we should have another pretty soon."

(168) To break a looking-glass is accounted the greatest of all mishaps, because it portends the death of some near and dear friend.

(169) If a corpse does not stiffen soon after death, it is regarded as a token that another member of the family will soon die. A woman who was speaking of the great mortality which had occurred in a neighbouring family, where she had lived many years as servant, told me of this curious superstition. She said, "The day after my master's death, one of his sisters-in-law came into the room and asked the nurse if she had ever heard that a limp corpse was a bad sign; and nurse made answer, 'La, miss! it's nothing but an old woman's saying.' But she winked at me; and when miss was gone she said, 'I didn't like to tell her the truth; but master's corpse not stiffening is a sure sign that death will be knocking pretty soon again at the door of this house for some other of the family;' and Miss Susan did not live many years after that herself."

(170) One is told in Sussex, that when death has entered a house he will not leave it without carrying off three of the inmates.

(171) Instances are by no means uncommon even of well-educated persons disliking to meet a funeral, from the general belief that, if you do so, your own will soon blacken the way. A good old gentleman of my acquaintance has been often known, whether on horseback or on foot, to turn round and go home again, however urgent his business might be, rather than meet one. (172) He also had a perfect faith that the thrice-repeated caws of a carrion crow are a token of death; and one day astonished all his family by announcing to them that they had lost a near relation. On their asking him how he had become acquainted with the fact, he said a carrion crow had just told him so, by flying over his head and uttering three dismal caws.

(173) The old gentleman just mentioned strictly forbade green brooms being used in his house during the month of May, and, as a reason for the prohibition, used to quote the adage—

“If you sweep the house with broom in May,
You’ll sweep the head of that house away;”

and this superstitious association between broom and death in the month of May is extended to its blossom. (174) A poor girl, who was lingering in the last stage of consumption, but whose countenance had always lighted up with pleasure at the sight of flowers, appeared one morning so exceedingly restless and unhappy, after a fresh nose-gay of gay spring flowers had been laid upon her bed, that I asked her if the scent of them was disagreeable to her. “Oh! no,” she exclaimed, “they are very nice indeed to smell; but yet I should be very glad if you would throw away that piece of yellow broom; for they do say that death comes with it if it is brought into the house in blossom during the month of May.” Nor is the broom the only flower that is regarded as a death-token. The snowdrop, that “fair maid of February,” and the primrose, Fletcher’s “firstborn child of Ver,” are equally dreaded, if one only is brought into the house when they first appear. (175) Hearing a child violently scolded for bringing into the house a single snowdrop, which the mother called a death-token, I

asked why she gave this pretty flower so bad a name, and was informed that "it looked for all the world like a corpse in its shroud, and that it always kept itself quite close to the earth, seeming to belong more to the dead than to the living." Why she believed that a single one brought death with it, whilst she regarded any larger number of them as harmless, she did not explain. (176) From the same woman I learned that the primrose was looked upon with such dread, because it used to be much sought after to strew on graves, and to dress up corpses in the coffin. Pity that so beautiful a custom should have been made the ground of such a superstitious presage! The same fear attaches to the black- and to the white-thorn blossoms. (177) A clergyman's wife* has told me that on lately visiting a woman in her parish she carried with her a piece of blackthorn in blossom, but she had hardly spoken before the woman snatched it from her hand and threw it out of the door, exclaiming, "How could you think, ma'am, of bringing that death-token into my house?" This strange superstition is supposed to be mysteriously associated with the apparent comingling of life and death, which the blackthorn presents in early spring, when it is clothed with its white flowers, but destitute of leaves.

(178) A much dreaded death-token in a West Sussex village where I once resided was that remarkable appearance known by the names of *ignis fatuus*, "Will o' the wisp," and "Jack o' lantern," which might be often seen in that neighbourhood, flitting from place to place over a large extent of marshy ground. The direction of its rapid undulating movement was always carefully observed, not from any curious admiration of the phenomenon, but from an anxiety to ascertain where it would disappear, as it was believed to be—

"The hateful messenger of heavy things,
Of death and dolour telling,"

to the inhabitants of the house nearest to that spot. Considerable alarm was once created in that same village by a pale light being observed to move over the bed of a sick person, and, after flickering for some time in different parts of the room, to vanish through the window. Of course so mysterious a manifestation was pronounced to

* Mrs. Ayling, of Tillington.

be a warning, and the nurse avowed moreover that she had seen such light some scores of times, but out of doors, and she believed a death had always followed. It happened, however, that I was myself enabled accidentally to clear up the mystery. For not long after, as I was sitting up in my own room reading after midnight, all at once something fell upon the open page and appeared to have ignited it. I started in a momentary alarm, but soon perceived that the light proceeded from a luminous insect, which proved to be the male glow-worm.

(179) There was a belief common enough in the weald a few years ago, closely resembling the French* superstition of the *Fétiches*, animals of a dazzling whiteness, which appear only in the night-time, and vanish as soon as any one attempts to touch them. A blacksmith's wife at Ashington, the daughter of a small farmer, was found one morning much depressed in mind, and on being questioned as to the cause of it, said, with a heavy sigh, "I shall hear bad news before the day is over; for late last night, as I was sitting up waiting for my husband, who had gone to Horsham, what should I see, on looking out of the window, lying close under it, but a thing like a duck, yet a great deal whiter than it ought to have been, whiter than any snow. I was all of a tremble and cried out quite loud, and off went the thing, faster than I ever saw anything run before." We suggested that it might have been a neighbour's cat, and that it looked whiter than usual in consequence of the moonlight falling upon it. "Oh, dear no!" she said, "it was no cat, nor anything alive;" those white things were sent as warnings; she should hear of a death before night. And, though no sad news came, she remained firmly convinced that a warning of some kind had been supernaturally sent to her.

(180) That the screech-owl should be regarded as a messenger of evil by the ignorant can excite no surprise in any one who is acquainted with its unearthly note. I was walking rather late one summer's evening close by the village church, when a strange, startling sound seemed suddenly to come from the low belfry, and continued so long that the inhabitants of the neighbouring cottages ran to the

* See Pluquet's *Contes Populaires*.

spot, to see what had occasioned it. At length an owl was seen sitting solemnly on the roof-ridge of the church. Satisfied with this discovery of the cause of the excitement, I was walking off, when some women stopped me to express their fears lest we should soon hear of a death in the parish. This, as we might expect, is one amongst the oldest and most universal of all superstitions. "The scritch owl, scritchng loud," put our poor villagers, as it may have put their forefathers in Shakspeare's time (*Mids. N. D.* v. 2), "in remembrance of a shroud," destined for themselves or some near neighbour. It is still "the fatal bellman that gives the stern'st good night." (*Macbeth*, ii. 2.) We know that it was in ill favour with the ancients as being a bird of evil omen, and the traditionary dislike to it is expressed in the old legend glanced at by poor Ophelia (*Ham.* iv. 5), that the owl was a baker's daughter, turned into an owl by our Lord for refusing to give him bread. (181) Nor is it surprising that the dark, forbidding looking raven, with its hoarse, sepulchral note, and stealthy way of dogging the steps of man, should be accounted an ill-omened bird; to say nothing of the very old belief in its prophetic powers, which certainly was held by our own Saxon forefathers. For Odin had two ravens, which he let loose every morning to collect intelligence of what was going on in the world, and at night on their return they lighted on his shoulders and unfolded to him the news that they had gathered. I have not met with any instance in my own immediate neighbourhood of the raven actually coming "o'er the infected house, boding to all;" or of the belief, that to it is given—

"The wond'rous power to know,
While health fills high the throbbing veins,
The fated hour when blood must flow;"

for it is by no means a common bird in Sussex, though one or two may generally be seen in the neighbourhood of the sea-shore. But it is not long since I heard of one exciting quite as great a horror in the heart of an old woman in the neighbourhood of Chichester as did that celebrated one, in the heart of the "Old woman of Berkeley:"

"The Raven croak'd as she sat at her meal,
And the old woman knew what she said,
And she grew pale at the Raven's tale,
And sicken'd, and went to bed;"

and there in bed our old woman of Sussex remained for several days, expecting every one would be her last, although she had up to the time of the raven's croak been in her usual state of health.

(182) I have met with even educated persons, as well as those whom the schoolmaster has not reached, who, if a hare were the first animal that crossed their path upon their leaving home, would turn back, regarding it as a warning, that, if they went any further on their way, death, or some dire mishap, would certainly befall them. Perhaps the old belief may still be lingering amongst us of a witch taking the form of a hare, either for the sake of the exercise of running before the hounds, or of the malicious gratification of disappointing the hunt.

(183) "A sound, for all the world like a chirping of chickens," some old nurses tell you, has been sometimes heard in the chamber of death, just before the spirit left the body.

(184) The dog too, like the raven, is believed to possess the faculty of anticipating death ; and there are instances without number of the alarm caused by a long-continued howling, at the dead of night, of some dog, who was perhaps baying at the moon, or might have lost his master, from the conviction that it was a sure foretoken of the death of some one of the household. This belief is by no means confined to the uneducated ; and I well remember the consternation amongst high and low at Worthing a few years ago, caused by a Newfoundland dog, the property of a clergyman in the neighbourhood, lying down on the steps of a house in Warwick Street, piteously, and refusing to be driven away ; it being made known that, soon after the howling commenced, a young lady, long an invalid, but who, it was believed, might still have lingered on for some weeks, had died there. This fact caused so much excitement, that the story reached the owner of the dog, who came to Worthing to inquire into the truth, when it turned out, much to the disgust of all lovers of the marvellous, that the dog had accidentally been separated from his master late in the evening, and had been seen running here and there in search of him, and howling at the door of the stable where he put up his horse, and other places which he often visited in Worthing. His master had called frequently at the house in Warwick Street, and the poor dog

went there; but it was ascertained that he had passed from it to the door of the reading-room in the same street, and it was there that he had howled so long and loud, to the dismay of numbers who averred next morning that the melancholy sound came from the steps of the house where the young lady died.

(185) An omen of death quite new to me has been lately added to my collection by our cook, who, on being questioned as to the state of the kitchen fire, when an envelope containing some bank notes had inadvertently been thrown into it, exclaimed, "Oh, dear me! it was indeed the blackest fire I ever saw; and, though I am not superstitious, I did not like its looks; and I said then, 'We have had two sudden deaths close to us, and if I do not make that horrid, black-looking fire blaze up, see if we don't soon hear of another death, or else some terrible misfortune.' So I gave it a good poke; and, when it still looked just as black as it had done before, I put a lot of lucifer matches into it, but still it would not burn up; and then we all got frightened, and thought it a very bad sign indeed. And so it has proved to be, for all that money has been burnt, and who can say but a death may follow pretty soon?" (186) Another superstition drawn from the state of the fire is, that its sudden blazing up is a sign of some stranger being near.

(187) The tapping of the beetle, known by the ominous name of the death-watch, is here, as elsewhere, deemed a warning that death is near at hand. How often has the sound made me start and tremble in my childhood when heard at night, in consequence of my having had this belief instilled into me by my nurse.

(188) A superstitious custom, in which the inhabitants of our country villages and towns have faith, believing that its omission is a death-omen, is, that the front door of a house through which a corpse is carried out must be kept wide open till the burial service is concluded, or else another death will follow very soon. A short time ago a death occurred in the St. Mary's Almshouses at Chichester; and on the morning of the funeral, as soon as the body had been carried out, the niece of the deceased locked the door of the apartment, and had hardly done so when she heard the inmates of the Almshouses thumping and rattling it to force it open. On finding all

their efforts useless, one of them exclaimed, "Hang that good-for-nothing woman ! her locking this door before the old girl is buried will bring death among us pretty soon again."

(189) I was told lately by a medical gentleman * in an adjoining parish of another strange death-token, a firm belief in which had probably caused the death of the patient, whose husband related it to him. The woman, one day when she was near her confinement, perceived a swarm of bees settled on a dead hedge-stake, and turning to her husband said, "That is a token of death, and it is sent to me." From that hour she declared that she should die in her confinement ; and her husband and the nurse, much to the surprise of the doctor, were evidently of the same opinion. At the end of a week or ten days the poor woman actually died. When the doctor called, the husband said he knew some time ago how it was to end, and on being asked what he meant, replied that they had had a token more than three weeks ago, when the bees swarmed on a dead hedge-stake. Gay mentions this amongst his rustic omens :

"Swarmed on a rotten stick the bees I spied,
Which last I saw when Goody Dobson died."
(*The Shepherd's Week*, part v. lines 108, 109.)

(190) To dream that a tree is uprooted in your garden is regarded as a death-warning to the owner. This is a widely-spread superstition, and has been practically commemorated, amongst others, by Mrs. Hemans, in *The Vassal's Lament for the Fallen Tree* :

"Yes ! I have seen the ancient oak
On the dark deep water cast." †

(191) Upon the death of an old woman lately in our parish, a farmer's wife observed to me that she knew three days before that the poor woman's end was near at hand, and on my asking how,—“ Oh ! ”

* Mr. Martin of Pulborough.

† Mrs. Hemans takes as a text for her poem a passage from Camden's *Britannia*. "Here (at Brereton, in Cheshire) is one thing incredibly strange, but attested, as I myself have heard, by many persons and commonly believed. Before any heir of the family dies, there are seen, in a lake adjoining, the bodies of trees swimming on the water for several days."

she said, "by her longing so for cider." I replied that she was very feverish, and had a constant thirst, which probably was the cause of her wishing for cider. "No," was the reply, "I do not think that had anything to do with it; for it is considered a sure sign of death when such people long for it." And she then went on to cite half a dozen instances, that had fallen under her own observation, of death following soon after a sick person had longed for cider.

From these specimens of our prognostics of death we may proceed to some other popular superstitions connected with the chamber of sickness and death. And in connection with lore just recorded may be mentioned the extraordinary belief (192) that if bees are not immediately informed of the death of the head of the family, some terrible misfortune will ensue. In western Sussex the bad news of their master's death is announced to them by some member of the family tapping with the key of the house-door against the side of every hive, saying at the same time that So-and-so is dead. In some places a piece of black crape is tied upon each hive.

Mrs. Briggs, my daughter's monthly nurse at Westdean, told me that when she was first in service she lived at a house where the son died; and that the mother in the midst of her grief turned to a servant and said, "Let the bees be told, or some fresh trouble will happen," and that she (Mrs. B.) was sent out into the garden for the purpose. She added, she knew many instances of some one being sent to inform the bees when a death had occurred in the family.

(193) If the feathers of game-birds, or of pigeons, are mixed up with the other feathers of the bed on which a dying person lies, they are supposed to prolong the death-struggle. I once heard a sick-nurse tell, with much self-satisfaction, how the poor person whom she attended wanted to die but could not, till she guessed how it was, and fetched away the bolster and the feather-bed, and then he went off easy. These nurses by profession are a strange race; and I believe there is no exaggeration in the following story:—The wife of the clergyman of an adjoining parish was told by one of them that never did she see any one die so hard as old Master Short; and at last she thought (though his daughter said there were none) that there must be

game-feathers in the bed, and she tried to pull it from under him; but he was a heavy man and she could not manage it alone, and there was no one with him but herself; and so she got a rope and tied it round him, and pulled him by it off the bed; and "he went off in a minute quite comfortable, just like a lamb."

(194) Doors and windows are frequently thrown wide open in the chamber of death, in order that the spirit may have a freer passage when it leaves the body. Drawers, too, are unlocked and opened, but wherefore has not been satisfactorily explained to me; and I remember once, when I was present in the sick room of a dying friend, being asked by the attendant nurse for the keys of a wardrobe, and when I had given them to her, under the impression that she wanted to take something out of it, I was surprised to see her merely throw back the doors and open all its numerous drawers. She then came close to me and said, that, as the poor gentleman's death struggles did not cease after she had left a passage for the spirit to go out by opening the door and window, she thought it might be the cabinets being locked that hindered it.

(195) The belief is very common that a mother's longing to keep her dying child on earth lengthens its last struggles, and that violent grieving for the dead will prevent their resting in their graves in peace. There is a song very popular in some parts of Sussex, and probably the production of some village poet, called *The Unquiet Grave*, which turns on this belief. I wrote down the song from the lips of a girl who repeated it to me, and, as it has not appeared in print, to my knowledge, it would be well to record it here:

THE UNQUIET GRAVE, A SUSSEX SONG.

"The wind doth blow to-day, my love,
And a few small drops of rain;
I never had but one true love
In cold grave she was lain.

I'll do as much for my true love
As any young man may,
I'll sit and mourn all at her grave
For a twelvemonth, and a day."

The twelvemonth and a day being up
The dead began to speak,
"Oh! who sits weeping on my grave
And will not let me sleep?"

"'Tis I, my love, sits on your grave
And will not let you sleep,
For I crave one kiss of your clay-cold lips
And that is all I seek."

"You crave one kiss of my clay-cold lips,
But my breath smells earthy strong;
If you have one kiss of my clay-cold lips
Your time will not be long:

'Tis down in yonder garden green,
Love, where we used to walk,
The finest flower that ere was seen
Is withered to a stalk.

The stalk is withered dry, my love,
So will our hearts decay;
So make yourself content, my love,
Till God calls you away."

And here my notes may end. The children inherit and honour the errors of their fathers. False doctrines undisputed come to be thought indisputable. They are in possession of the minds of the many, and possession is held to be so good a title that the popular superstitions of the present generations are likely, to a large extent, to keep their hold upon the next—and, mayhap, upon the next and next.

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 WONDERS, Chap. ii.
 Word charms, 13 (56), 24 (86), 28 (91), 30 (94, 95), 31 (99), 32 (100), 33 (107), 35-37 (109-112), 40 (127), 44, 45 (147, 148), 50 (165)
 ——— cures 35-37 (109-112), 40 (127), 44, 45 (147, 148)
 "Worsling" apple-trees, 13 (56)
 Wounds, blessings for, 35-37 (109-112)
 ——— with sharp instruments, 43, 44 (141)

Y.

Yarrow, a use of, 32 (100)
 Yellow pin, 33 (105)

MISCELLANEOUS.

NOTES ON FOLK-TALES.



OF all the branches of popular literature, the folk-tale has been of late years the most studied. Every country in Europe has contributed its share towards a general collection of stories current among the people, and numerous additions to the stock have been made by collectors in all parts of the world. But the contributions have varied greatly, both in volume and in worth. Germany led the way, and its wide field has been worked by more explorers than any other country has produced. Two of the largest and most valuable of recent collections have been made in Russia and in Sicily, Afanasief having published 332 Russian stories (Moscow, 1863), and Dr. Giuseppe Pitre 300 Sicilian stories (Palermo, 1875), the texts being provided in each case with copious and excellent notes, and numerous variants being often given. England's share, on the other hand, has been a small one, confined to local collections. Ireland was early in the field, and the West Highlands of Scotland have yielded a rich harvest to Mr. J. F. Campbell, whose published collection contains 86 tales, besides many variants, and whose stock of as yet unprinted stories derived from Scotland and Ireland must be immense, for in 1862 he was able to say : "791 is the number now reached, and the manuscripts would fill a wheelbarrow." But the folk-tales which have been collected and put upon record in England itself are by no means numerous, and they are often not very good of their kind. It is to be feared that it is now too late to remedy the neglect from which they have suffered. Mr. Campbell is inclined to think that many English folk-tales still exist, though it may not be easy to discover them. But the general opinion seems to be, that, although many local traditions have survived, as well as numerous short stories or anecdotes illustrative of rustic superstitions, especially of those relating to fairies,

yet the genuine popular tale, not derived from literature, but orally transmitted from generation to generation of the common people, not only is all but extinct, but has left behind it singularly few traces of its former existence. In early times it probably flourished in England as well as in other lands. But some as yet unexplained cause must have brought its career to an untimely end. Some students of the subject have attributed its decay to the Reformation, others to Puritanism or to the spread of education. But England does not stand alone so far as education or Protestantism are concerned, and its local and temporary Puritanism can scarcely have annihilated a flourishing branch of national fiction. Whatever the cause may have been, the evil it wrought seems irreparable ; unless, indeed, the efforts of the Folk-lore Society, working in concert over the whole face of the land, may succeed in doing for England as a whole what has been already done by single workers for some parts of it. As yet, the only writer who has devoted a special work to the tales of the whole kingdom is M. Bruyère,* but of the hundred stories which he quotes forty belong to Scotland, twenty-seven to Ireland, and four to the Isle of Man. In modern days the old English nursery tales appear to have given way to versions of the French adaptations of Perrault and his successors. Of the older stories, preserved in class-books and other works, two only appear to have a specially English ring about them, Jack the Giant-Killer and Tom Hickathrift. Not that those tales can be set down as original creations of the English mind, but they seem to have been naturalized in England at an early date, and to have remained for a considerable period comparatively free from foreign influence. Of Jack and the Beanstalk, moreover, something of the same kind may perhaps be said.

It is impossible to impress too strongly on collectors the absolute necessity of accurately recording the stories they hear, and of accompanying them by ample references for the sake of verification. The temptation to alter, to piece together, and to improve, is one which many minds find extremely seductive ; but yielding to it deprives the result of any value, except for the purpose of mere amusement. In

* *Contes Populaires de la Grande-Bretagne* par Loys Bruyère. Paris (Hachette) 1875.

this respect Mr. Campbell's *Tales of the West Highlands* may be taken as a model. Nor can collectors be too impressively warned against the danger of drawing hasty inferences from the stories which come before them, of putting them forward as illustrations or proofs of some historical or mythological theory. The functions of a collector and a commentator differ widely, and it is seldom that the one is capable of accomplishing the other's special work. Patience, industry, and conscientiousness are the main qualifications required in the case of gatherers of material. But examiners and sifters of gathered stores ought to possess, in addition to these virtues, exceptional prudence and cautiousness, while the final dealer with the accumulated stores, he who is to turn them to ultimate account, to piece together scattered fragments, to resolve disorder into symmetrical arrangement, to rebuild out of shapeless ruins temples of ancient gods, must have still higher qualifications, wide and deep learning, matured judgment, and well-trained skill. That highly-qualified person does not seem to have yet appeared upon the scene.

So attractive, however, are the problems which folk-tales present with respect to their origin and meaning, that many fruitless attempts will probably be made to solve them before their destined solver arrives. Each of the two hypotheses which have been put forward to account for the existence, in so many lands, of similar popular tales has its own points of deep interest, its claims to arrest attention, to pique curiosity, and to stimulate devotion to its cause. No loftier origin, no more venerable parentage, can be assigned to any form of literature than that which is ascribed to folk-tales by scholars who recognise in them "heirlooms of the Aryan family"; who consider that they have been independently developed by the various branches of that family, from mythological germs which existed in the minds of our primæval ancestors, while they still inhabited their ancient home in the highlands of Central Asia. Viewed in this light, such a story as that of the *Sleeping Beauty* may well inspire a respect bordering upon veneration. In the world's morning-time, before the religious instincts of our ancestors had taken distinct shape or found articulate utterance, the idea may well have occurred to some of the more poetic among them that the revival of the earth in Spring resembled an

awakening from sleep. And from this simile may have sprung a legend of a maiden who slept through a space of time corresponding with or typical of the length of the winter season, and who then awoke to active life and enjoyment. This legend may easily have been carried away by the emigrants who successively moved southward or westward from their home, and it may have served as a theme for the story-tellers to enlarge upon for the benefit of their hearers, Asiatic and European, till each division of every branch of the Aryan family had its own cherished form of the ancient tale. If this explanation of the birth and growth of the story be accepted, and if other popular tales be credited with a similar history, there can scarcely be any limits set to the respect which their lineage ought to inspire, or to the value which ought to be attributed to them as illustrations of ancient beliefs.

But there is one difficulty which*attends this method of accounting for the marked similarity which prevails among the various forms which some stories have assumed in divers lands. That similarity appears to be too great. Many mythologies and many languages have been elaborated from common mythological and linguistic germs by the nations into which the Aryan family has grown. And between the various systems of religion or speech a family likeness exists, but it is one which, except in a very few instances, can be recognised only by the eye of the trained mythologist or linguist. Lapse of time and altered circumstances so affected them that they lost, ages ago, so far as ordinary spectators were concerned, their mutual resemblance. But the tales preserved among the common people in a score of lands still offer similarities patent to every observer, not only their incidents being frequently alike, but the sequence in which these incidents follow each other being in many cases all but invariable. This difficulty is obviated if we can accept the other hypothesis, according to which at least a great part of the folk-tales now existing in Europe have been borrowed from the East. According to it, oriental story-tellers, ages ago, composed countless tales, often taking as their themes legends based upon mythological ideas common to all the Indo-European races, and their compositions became current in various parts of cultured Asia, at a time when by far the greater part of

Europe was still utterly destitute of anything approximating to culture. In the course of time these stories gradually made their way westward, becoming naturalised and somewhat modified in every land which they successively reached, until the whole European popular mind was saturated by this stream of oriental fiction.

If this hypothesis be correct, the folk-tales of Europe do not reflect European mythology, and cannot be used as evidence relating to it, except in so far as they are in many cases founded upon mythological ideas developed from germs common to the ancestors, both of the Easterns who elaborated those tales, and of the Westerns who borrowed them. Thus the inner meaning of the story of the Sleeping Beauty is, in accordance with European as well as Asiatic myths, apparently relating to the slumber of nature during the winter. But its outward form, its framework or setting, may be due to the artistic imagination of the East. This hypothesis, satisfactory as it may seem to be in explanation of the similarity prevailing among European variants of the same tale, is not deficient in its attractive difficulties, its fascinating puzzles. To account for the onward drift of the stories, their universal reception and preservation, is by no means easy. The effect produced upon mediæval European fiction by the translation of certain collections of Asiatic written tales has been made clear to all. The evidence which proves it is direct and indisputable. But with respect to the borrowing of tales preserved by oral tradition only indirect evidence can generally be obtained. A few instances occur in which language bears witness to a story's migrations. Thus the well-known substitution of *verre* for *vair*, in the French description of Cinderella's slipper, enables us to detect the French origin of some variants of her history. Whenever she is found wearing a slipper of glass, we may be sure that her story has at least been subjected to a French influence, and that at a comparatively recent period. Another instance of this kind of test is afforded by one of Mr. Webster's Basque legends. In it a man who tries to repeat a spell which he has heard a witch employ in order to fly through the air, says, "Over the clouds and under the hedges," instead of "Under the clouds and over the hedges," and suffers much in consequence of his error. Mr. Webster remarks, "The blunder is confounding *dessus*, over, and *dessous*, under. This shows that the tale is

originally French, or at least the witch's part of it; for this punning mistake could not be made in Basque." But such verbal tests as these are so rare that they do not supply any appreciable amount of evidence. The mention of animals unknown to Europe might seem to bear witness to the Asiatic origin of some stories, but such testimony is uncertain. As Professor Benfey has remarked, the lion, of which the German people know nothing except by hearsay, has long ago in popular opinion dethroned the old German king of the beasts, the bear. But in tracing the origin of a story such details are of slight importance compared with its general tenour, its inner meaning. Underlying the tales which have become popular favourites certain moral or mythological ideas are generally perceptible, an examination of which will, in at least many instances, give some clue as to the original home of those tales. It would greatly facilitate researches of this kind if some general system of classification of popular tales could be agreed upon, in accordance with which every story in a fresh collection could be referred at once to its proper place, might be designated by a number or a name. Some tales are manifestly capable of being reduced to order, and ranked under the names of some prominent and familiar member of the group to which they belong. Thus we may speak of Cinderella or Giant-Killer stories, with full assurance that we shall be generally intelligible and sufficiently precise. But there are others which are not to be so simply denoted, and which seem to require more elaborate formulas for their identification, perhaps resembling those used in chemistry. The most elaborate attempt at a classification of folk-tales yet made is that due to J. G. von Hahn, who prefixed to his collection of Greek and Albanian Tales (1864) a scheme for the reduction of such stories to their original elements, and their arrangement in divisions and groups. His plan was afterwards employed and modified by Mr. Baring Gould, whose classification of "Story Radicals" is appended to Mr. Henderson's "Folk-lore of the Northern Counties." Hahn arranges the stories with which he deals in three divisions, the first relating to family ties, the second to miscellaneous subjects, the third to contests of heroes and demons. These three divisions are subdivided into forty sections, to each of which is given, when possible, the name of the principal actor or actors in some well-known myth or story of the

group which it represents. A condensation of his synopsis, which occupies 16 pages of his work, may be attempted as follows :—

DIVISION I.—FAMILY.

SUBDIVISION A.—HUSBAND AND WIFE AFFECTED BY

(a) *Desertion.*

1. Psyche.—Supernatural husband deserts wife.
2. Melusina.—Supernatural wife deserts husband.
3. Penelope.—Faithful wife recovers truant husband.

(b) *Expulsion.*

4. Calumniated wife banished but restored.

(c) *Sale or Purchase.*

- 5—6. Access to spouse or loved-one bought.

SUBDIVISION B.—PARENT AND CHILD.

(a) *Children longed for.*

7. They assume for a time monstrous shapes.
8. They are made victims to a vow or promise.
9. Their birth is attended by various wonders.

(b) *Exposure of Children.*

10. Amphion.—Babe exposed by unmarried mother.
11. Œdipus.—Babe exposed by married parents.
12. Danae.—Mother and babe exposed together.
13. Andromeda.—Daughter exposed to a monster.

(c) *Step-children.*

14. Little Snow-white. Stepmother persecutes girl.
15. Phrixus and Helle. Stepmother persecutes a brother and sister.

SUBDIVISION C.—BROTHERS AND SISTERS.

16. Youngest brother ill-treated by elder brothers.
17. Cinderella. Youngest sister ill-treated.
18. Dioscuri. Twins help each other.
19. Sister (or mother) betrays brother (or son).
20. Sister saves brother from enchantment.
21. Heroine supplanted by step-sister (or servant).
22. Magic brothers-in-law assist hero.

DIVISION II.—MISCELLANEOUS.

(a) *Bride-Winning.*

23. Bride won by heroic exploits.

24. Bride won by ingenuity.

(b) *Abduction of Heroine.*

25. Proserpine. Heroine carried off by force.

26. Helen and Paris.

27. Medea and Jason.

(c) *Various Subjects.*

28. Swan-maidens robbed of garments and married.

29. Snake-brought herbs restore life.

30. Bluebeard. A Forbidden Chamber opened

31. Punchkin, or the Giant without any heart.

32. Grateful Beasts assist hero.

33. Hop-o'-my Thumb. Hero tiny but brave.

34. A strong fool works wonders.

35. Faithful John, or Rama and Luxman.

36. Disguisal of hero or heroine.

DIVISION III.—CONTRAST OF INNER AND OUTER WORLD.

37. Hero is killed by demon, but revives.

38. Hero defeats demon.

39. Hero tricks demon.

40. Lower world visited.

Mr. Baring Gould arranges his stories according to 51 "Story-Radicals." They form two main divisions, the first containing "Family Stories," the second "Various." The first division is subdivided into four classes, relating to : 1. Husband and Wife; 2. Parent and Child; 3. Brother and Sister; 4. Persons Betrothed. The second also contains four classes, relating to: 1. Men and the Unseen World; 2. Men matched with Men; 3. Men and Beasts; 4. Luck depending on the preservation of a Palladium.

These attempts at orderly arrangement are of much practical use. But their weak point is that in them too much attention is generally paid to the mere framework of the story, the setting, which often

varies with time and place ; more stress being often laid upon the accidental than the essential parts of a tale. It may, perhaps, be allowable to suggest a different method of classification. Stories might be divided, first of all, into two divisions—mythological and non-mythological. The mythological stories ought then to be arranged, so far as is possible, according to the principal myth which they appear to illustrate or embody, little attention being paid to the mere framework of the story, to the fact that the human actors in it are few or many, are bound by parental or fraternal or matrimonial ties. The non-mythological stories, among which would be classed many which deal accidentally with mythological beings, might be divided into moral stories, puzzles, jokes, &c.; the moral stories being arranged according to the leading ideas which were in the mind of the teacher who first shaped them, the others being classified in any manner found practically convenient. If some such system could be universally adopted, story-comparers would be spared much loss of time and labour. The results of an attempt thus to classify the collection made by J. and W. Grimm will be given at the end of this article.

It is often, no doubt, difficult to decide whether a story ought to be classed under this or that head. But most tales, if a sufficient number of their variants are collected and compared, offer some salient points, some prominent features, which may be taken as their true characteristics. By way of illustration of the preceding remarks, a few cases in point may be mentioned. Almost all the tales about Grateful Beasts, of which Puss-in-Boots is the most familiar representative, are manifest expansions of moral apologues intended to show that man ought to behave with kindness towards the brute creation. The idea that the lower animals ought to be humanely treated is of recent date in Europe, in some parts of which it has made little progress even at the present day. But it prevailed in Asia ages ago, the Buddhists laying special stress upon the duty of respecting all animal life, and striving to impress the necessity of so doing upon the minds of their disciples by means of numerous fables and tales. A favourite subject with these teachers was the striking contrast offered by the ingratitude of man and the gratitude of beasts, one which makes itself clearly apparent in every complete version of Puss-in-Boots.

In European visions of that tale this contrast is often wanting, the ultimate unkindness of the man to the cat or other animal being omitted. Or else the original opening of the story is lost, that in which a reason is given for the animal's devotion to the man, which ought to be due to its gratitude for kindness or forgiveness. No version has yet been found in the West which is as complete and as consistent as that which was discovered in the Caucasus, and has been given by Schiefner in his collection of Avar Tales. In it a miller traps a marauding fox, but allows it to go free. Its gratitude induces it to play the part attributed in our version of the story to the domestic cat, a comparatively recent importation into fairyland, the only stipulation which it makes being that it shall receive at its death an honourable funeral. The enriched and ennobled miller forgets his obligations to the fox. It pretends to die, and he is about to consign it to an unhonoured grave, when it returns to life, and reduces him to penitence by threatening to disclose the secret of his lowly birth.

Another cat story probably belongs to the same class of moral tales originally intended to inculcate humanity towards animals, the legend of Whittington. That it was known several centuries ago in Persia is proved by literary evidence, but it probably existed at a much earlier period in India, where variants of it may still be current. Some of the Russian variants seem to be worthy of mention on account of the evidence they bear to the moral nature of the tale. In one (Afanasief, v. 32) a labourer works conscientiously for three years. At the end of each year he receives a copeck from his employer, which he drops into a river, saying, "If I have served justly and faithfully my copeck will not sink." And when he does this for the third time all three copecks float on the surface of the water. He takes them back and they bring him good luck. One of them he gives to a man who is going to a church, telling him to spend it on a candle to be burnt before a holy picture. Being dropped in the church, the coin takes fire, and illuminates the whole building. With another he purchases a cat which, in a catless region much plagued by rats and mice, is exchanged for three ships. With these ships he sails to a land where, by the aid of the third copeck, he is enabled to save from a demon a princess whom he afterwards marries.

In another story (Afanasief, vii. 22) the youngest of three brothers, who is a simpleton, lays out the money he has inherited in the purchase of a dog and a cat. The dog afterwards assists him, when he is living alone and in poverty, by providing him with food. The cat he ships as merchandise on board a vessel which is going to sea, and which comes to a land where "rats and mice are as plentiful as blades of grass in a field." The captain goes ashore with his goods and carries the cat along with him. A merchant invites him to his house, and gives him a bed in a barn which is infested by rats and mice. In the morning the host goes thither, expecting to find nothing left of his guest but bare bones. To his astonishment the captain is alive and well ; the cat is just finishing the last rat. Whereupon the merchant buys the cat for six caskfuls of gold. Now comes the most characteristic part of the story. The simpleton is greatly puzzled as to how he shall spend the three caskfuls of money which fall to his share. At length he wanders through towns and villages, giving money to the poor, until two of the casks are emptied. With the contents of the third he buys incense, which he burns in the open air. Its sweet savour goes up to heaven, and suddenly an angel appears, saying, "The Lord has bid me ask what thou wishest to have." In doubt what to reply, he consults an old man, who says, "If riches are given thee, may be thou wilt forget God ; better choose a wise wife." The simpleton does so, and never has reason to repent of his choice.

More important than the moral are the mythological stories. Some of these may fairly be resolved into nature-myths. The story of the Sleeping Beauty has already been mentioned as a probable expansion of an idea suggested by the apparent awakening of nature every spring from her winter sleep. And all the tales of the Cinderella class, in which an originally brilliant being is reduced to a state of temporary obscurity or eclipse, but is eventually restored to his or her pristine splendour, are probably based upon similar notions connected with the phenomena of day and night or of the seasons of the year. As the nature-myths clustering around the sun or the storm, into which many of these stories seem to be resolvable, were common to European and Asiatic mythology, the fact that they underlie a number of European tales cannot

by itself be used as evidence of their original domicile. But there are also mythological ideas familiar to the East, but not to Europe, which seem to have given rise to certain groups of folk-tales. These tales cannot be explained in accordance with any known system of European mythology; or at least can be rendered intelligible only by such a stretch of the "solar theory" as is apt to inflict damage upon a system of explanation which is capable of doing good service if not too violently handled. But they are perfectly in accordance with mythological ideas still prevailing in the East; they can be thoroughly explained as embodiments of those ideas; and they coincide in many respects with tales which are current among many oriental peoples.

To insist upon recognising nature-myths in these stories appears to be injudicious, though their mythology may possibly be capable of being traced back to an earlier form, which may have had reference to beneficent luminaries and hostile powers of darkness. In many cases the kernel of the story, after we have stripped off the outer shell which time and travel may have disfigured, seems to be decidedly oriental, and in those cases we may be allowed to assume that it has come to us from some oriental source. As specimens of this class of mythological tales may be taken all such stories as *Beauty and the Beast* or *the Frog Prince*. The numerous stories of this class which are to be found in Asia seem to be based upon the idea, familiar to Indian mythology, that a divine or semi-divine being may be compelled to assume the form of a mortal, even of one of the inferior animals—of a snake, an ape, or a frog—and to retain that form, either constantly or during certain periods, until the spell or curse to which the compulsion is due becomes broken. As a general rule the outward form assumed is a species of husk, which can be donned or doffed in an instant; and on the preservation or destruction of that husk by its discoverers, during the temporary absence of its usual wearer, depends the continuance of the spell. In the Indian forms of such a story, the leading idea being intelligible to its narrators, the tale itself generally remains intelligible, and, within the limits allowed to such fiction, reasonable. But the European variants, handed down by generations of tellers to whom the mythological basis of the story was quite unfamiliar, have often lost those pretensions to probability which even a

fairy tale should possess, that respect for consistency which no story-teller should ignore.

As an illustration of the confusion of ideas to which this transference of tales into alien lands gives rise may be taken one of the numerous stories relating to destiny. These stories form a large group connected with the mythological class, inasmuch as they deal with mythological beings, but properly belong to the moral class, since they are intended to inculcate the doctrine that human life is ruled by fate, that no man can escape from his allotted doom. Fatalism has never completely overpowered any of the western nations, though it has long exercised no slight influence for evil in several parts of Europe. The belief of classic times in Fates, Moirai or Parcæ, divine beings who allot to each human life, at its commencement, its span and tenour, has survived to our own days in the popular faith of Greece in *Moirais*, of Italy in *Sorti* and *Fate*, and of Western Europe in the Fairies, whose name, as well as some of their attributes, appear to have descended through the *Fate* from the ancient Fates. But on the energetic nations of Northern Europe, in spite of a theoretic belief in Norns and similar beings, the idea of an inexorable destiny, relentlessly controlling man's free will, seems never to have got a firm hold, and in their popular tales it does not play a specially prominent part.

An old historian asserts that the ancient Slavs had no belief in fatality, that their mythology recognised no Fates. This seems to have been too sweeping an assertion ; but they do not appear to have developed the idea of an all-controlling destiny so fully as the Hellenic and Italic races, from whose descendants they afterwards borrowed their religious systems. On Russia the influence of the fatalistic East has been considerable, and to this day remains a source of much harm ; but the belief in luck and destiny which it has inspired is vague and uncertain, and scarcely calculated to take definite form in such a story as the following, which is taken from one of the Russian romances called "builinas." The hero Sviatogor is told by an old man, whom he finds spinning threads of destiny, that he is doomed to marry a certain maiden whose skin is like the bark of a tree. He goes to inspect her, finds her asleep, and, not liking her looks, attempts to escape from his fate by cutting her throat. Then he goes away, think-

ing he has killed her. But his sword has merely perforated her bark-like outer cuticle, without inflicting any other injury upon her than a trifling cut. When she awakes and gets up, that species of husk splits and falls off, and the true skin which it discloses is soft and fair. Time passes by and Sviatogor meets, admires, woos, and wins her. Observing one day, after the marriage has taken place, a scar upon her throat, he asks her how it was caused. She tells him how, years before, she was covered by a sort of husk, and how it was split by a sword-cut, which some stranger dealt her as she lay asleep in such and such a place. And when her husband hears the wondrous tale he silently marvels, perceiving that no man can ever escape from his destined wife. This is a good specimen of a story which in its European form is unreasonable, even when all due allowance has been made, and which, though manifestly mythological, is not to be fully explained by what we know of the ancient mythology of the country in which it is found ; but of which an Asiatic variant exists whereof the details are reasonable and the mythological meaning intelligible.

In China wedding cards are connected by threads, in reference to which the following story is told. A traveller once found an old man spinning mystic threads by which he was told couples destined to be wedded were linked. Asking whom he was destined to wed, he was told the name and abode of a certain damsel. He went to look at her, found she was a poor and neglected orphan, and hired an assassin to kill her. But his agent only wounded her. She recovered, grew up, and was adopted by a wealthy official. Whereupon her destined husband courted and married her. After the wedding, he asked her why she always wore a flower hanging over her forehead. She replied that it was to hide the scar left by a wound received in early youth, and proceeded to relate the history of her attempted assassination. Whereupon the Chinese husband mentally made the same observation which occurred to the Russian Sviatogor. It is probable that the part of the story which relates to a destined marriage has been borrowed by the Russian tale from Asia. The incident, on the other hand, of the husk which is split by the sword-cut appears to be taken from the Scandinavian story of Brynhild's Magic Sleep, unbroken till the re-

moval, by means of Sigurd's sword, of the corslet which has, as it were, grown to her body.*

One of the most popular of the world's folk-tales, being found in very many countries far apart, is that which relates the adventures of three comrades, usually but not invariably brothers, who contend with some demoniacal being, which escapes from them into an underground abode. One of them follows it, lowered by the others, and kills it. In its dwelling he finds much wealth, together with three fair princesses. These his comrades hoist out of the abyss. But him they leave to perish below. He escapes, however, generally by means of a grateful bird, and returns home to punish his treacherous companions. The story has various openings, the companions sometimes being the three sons of a king, whose garden or orchard is ravaged by a monster which they go forth to kill. Sometimes the demoniacal being appears in the shape of a dwarf, who overcomes two of the party but is worsted by the third. One of these dwarf stories will serve as a good specimen of the similarity which occurs between some tales widely current in Europe and also familiar to races which, not belonging to the Aryan family, can scarcely be supposed to have inherited Aryan mythological germs, and to have independently developed from them the folk-tales which they possess.

A Lithuanian tale (Schleicher, No. 38) tells how the hero Martin went into a forest to hunt, accompanied by a smith and a tailor. Finding an empty hut they took possession of it; the tailor remained in it to cook the dinner, and the others went forth to the chase. When the dinner was almost ready, there came to the hut a very little old man with a very long beard, who piteously begged for food. After receiving it he sprang on the tailor's neck and beat him almost to death. When the hunters returned they found their comrade groaning on his couch, complaining of illness, but saying nothing about the

* The idea of a destined wife, combined with a recollection of the ring of Polycrates, is found in our ballad of "The Fish and the Ring," in which a knight attempts to destroy a maiden whose horoscope told him she was fated to become his wife. He is about to throw her into the sea, when he relents, and throws in his ring instead, vowing that he will not marry her till she produces the ring—which she eventually does, having found it in a fish.

bearded dwarf. The next day the smith suffered in a similar way. But, when it came to Martin's turn, he proved too wary and too strong for the dwarf, whom he overcame, and whom he fastened by the beard to the stump of a tree. But the dwarf tore himself loose before the hunters came back from the forest, and escaped into a cavern. Tracing him by the drops of blood which had fallen from him, the three companions came to the mouth of the cavern, and Martin was lowered into it by the two others. Within it he found three princesses, who had been stolen by three dragons. These dragons he slew, and the princesses and their property he took to the spot above which his comrades kept watch, who hoisted them out of the cavern, but left Martin in it to die. As he wandered about disconsolately, he found the bearded dwarf, whom he slew. And soon afterwards he was conveyed out of the cavern by a flying serpent, and was able to punish his treacherous friends, and to recover the princesses, all three of whom he simultaneously married.

Variants of this story will be found in most of the large European collections. But a specially interesting parallel is afforded by a Calmuck story (Jülg's *Kalmükische Märchen*, No. 3) borrowed from an Indian source. The hero, Massang, and his three companions, in the course of their wanderings, found an empty house, of which they took possession. One of them remained at home to cook, the others went to the chase. To him who remained in the hut appeared an old woman, only a span high, who asked for food. Having obtained a morsel, she immediately seized the remainder and disappeared. The hunters returned from the chase, and found no dinner ready. But their comrade was ashamed so tell the truth, and declared that a band of foes had pillaged the hut. For three days running the same thing happened. Each of Massang's companions was tricked by the little old woman, who cleared the board and disappeared. But, when Massang's turn came to remain at home, he was on his guard against her tricks, and when she used force, marvellously strong as she proved to be, he was too cunning and too strong for her, binding her fast and beating her till the blood streamed forth. At last she got away and disappeared. But by her blood-gouts Massang and his companions traced her to a cavern. Into this Massang was let down by a

rope, and found the little old woman lying dead, with heaps of gold and jewels around her. These Massang sent up to his companions, who took them and went away, leaving him down below. Eventually he escaped, found his faithless companions, pardoned them, and went his way.

The origin of the Calmuck tale is known, the *Siddhi-kür*, from which it comes, being the Mongol form of the Indian *Vetālapanchavins'ati*. How it found its way into Lithuania we do not know, but it seems much more probable that it was, like the Calmuck tale, borrowed from India than independently developed from a Pan-Aryan mythological germ. These Mongol tales have a special interest, inasmuch as critics of the school of Benfey ascribe to the Mongols, in consequence of their long ascendancy over so large a part of the East of Europe, a great influence upon European popular fiction. According to them, India, the early home of so immense a mass of stories, was the source from which the folk-tales of the present day streamed forth, originally disseminated by the Buddhistic peoples, and subsequently further transmitted by the Mahommedans.

One of the best of the tales of the *Siddhi-kür* may be taken as a specimen of a large group of stories which are at the same time mythological and moral; supernatural personages being introduced, but acting in such a manner as to teach, though unintentionally, a moral lesson. The leading idea in all the stories of this class which have kept true to their original forms is the same. Two persons of opposite characters are contrasted in them, the one meritorious, the other undeserving. The former is rewarded, the latter punished. But in the course of time and travel the contrast between the moral natures of the actors has sometimes been obscured, and their rewards or punishments appear to be capriciously allotted to them, being the result of accident rather than of justice. In the Mongol tale (Jülg, No. 14) the human actors are two brothers, the one of whom is poor, the other rich and avaricious. The poor man finds in a forest a number of Dakinis, demons of the fairy tribe, who possess a wonder-working hammer, which enables its wielder to obtain everything for which he expresses a desire. When the spirits have flown away, he carries their hammer to his home, and there by its aid provides himself with wealth. His

greedy brother, seeing this, compels him by threats to reveal his secret. As soon as he hears of the hammer and the spot in which it was found, off he sets, presumably to see what he can find there to his own advantage. But on his arrival he is pounced upon by the demons, who assume that he is the stealer of their hammer, and who proceed to punish him by stretching his nose and tying nine knots in it. After which they allow him to go home. His sole hope of getting his nose-knots untied lies in the magic hammer owned by his brother, who is induced, by the promise of a large reward, to attempt to cure him. Eight of the nine knots are successfully unloosed by the hammer's tap. Then the patient is induced by his wife and his avarice to send his brother away, and refuse payment for the incomplete operation. As the hammer-bearer leaves the house, the wife snatches the magic implement from him, slams the door after him, and returns in triumph to complete the cure. But, using the hammer unskilfully, she hits her husband so hard with it that she splits his skull asunder. He dies, and she and all his goods pass to the brother whom he had tried to cheat.

In this story the merits or demerits of the contrasted persons are not very different. For, if the one refuses to give anything to his poor brother, the other declines to help his suffering brother unless a rich reward is promised him. In a Japanese story * two men are contrasted who differ only in the quality of their dancing. According to it a man who had a wen on the right side of his face took refuge one stormy night in a hollow tree. After a time a number of elves arrived, who proceeded to drink and to dance. When they had finished the man came forth from the tree, and "now stretching himself out, now drawing himself together, with quips and cranks and every gesture he was master of, went circling round the entire area, singing in a drunken voice the while." The elves were delighted, invited him to come again, and to ensure his doing so took from him his wen, and kept it as a pledge. When he returned home with a smooth face, his next door neighbour, who had a wen on the left cheek, inquired about his cure,

* Mitford's "Tales of Old Japan," i. 276. The version quoted above was supplied by Mr. J. C. Hall to Mr. Charles Goodwin, who printed it in a lecture read before the Asiatic Society of Japan, March 17, 1875.

and determined to take advantage of the information he received. So he also passed a night in the hollow tree. The elves arrived, and inquired if the dancer had come. The man appeared, but his performance was very inferior to that of his predecessor. After he had made "an awkward attempt at a dance," the elves were so displeased that they determined he should have his pledge back, and should not be invited to come again. So one of them took the wen and threw it at him. And it stuck on his right cheek, "so that now he had a wen on both sides of his face."

In several variants of the same tale found in Ireland, Brittany, Spain, and elsewhere, the supernatural actors are fairies, the human beings contrasted are hunchbacks. As the story is well known it may be very briefly noticed. The genial and melodious hunchback, hearing a number of fairies singing the names of some of the days of the week, improves their song by the addition of the names of some more days. The fairies are delighted, and reward him by taking off his hump, removing it, according to one version, "with a saw of butter." When he returns home, another hunchback, a man of a morose character, and with no ear for music, becoming envious, and hearing how and where he has been cured, determines to follow his example. He seeks the fairies, and finds them singing the new version of their song, upon which he shouts out an addition to it, hoping for a reward. But his contribution displeases them so much, that they take his predecessor's hump and clap it on the top of his own, from which it can never be removed; so he has two humps instead of one. According to some variants he was so punished because he shouted out Sunday; according to others, because he omitted to do so. But his real crime, doubtless, was, that he sang badly and not to the purpose.

Much nearer to the original meaning of the story has kept one of the most widely-spread of the popular tales of this class, the "Two Wanderers" of Grimm (No. 107), and the "True and Untrue" of the "Tales from the Norse." In it the moral is so obvious that no change of time or place has sufficed to obscure it. In all the versions, which are very numerous, the leading incidents remain the same. One of two travellers takes advantage of the other's need, and deprives him of his eyesight. Sometimes the blinding is the consequence of a wager,

sometimes the victim's eyes are the price of food necessary to keep him from starvation. But the result is the same. He is left by his heartless blinder to perish. But overhearing a conversation between spirits, witches, or animals, he learns how to recover his sight, and to perform certain wonders which render him wealthy. His wicked companion, finding out what has happened, goes to the spot where the conversation took place, hoping to benefit by it. But the conversers, imagining that he is their former overhearer, tear him to pieces. Dr. Reinhold Köhler, in a note on the first of Widter and Wolf's *Volksmärchen aus Venedig*, has given references to about twenty European variants of the story.

To these may be added a curious specimen of the Asiatic variants, taken from the Kirghis tales contained in Radloff's great collection of South Siberian folk-lore.* A good man and a bad man were traveling together, and the good man's food came to an end. Appealing to his companion for advice, he was recommended to cut off his ears and eat them, which he did. When they were consumed, he again appealed to his comrade, who persuaded him to have his eyes taken out, on which he lived for two days. Then his bad companion deserted him, leaving him alone in a dark forest. As he sat there he heard a tiger, a fox, and a wolf holding converse together, and learnt that two neighbouring trees had the power of giving ears to the earless and eyes to the blind; that the bones of a certain rich man's black dog could bring back the dead to life; and that a hill not far off contained a mass of gold as large as a horse's head. Before long he had obtained from the trees new eyes and ears, and from the hill the mass of gold, with which he bought the rich man's black dog. By means of its bones he restored to life a Khan, who gratefully bestowed upon his reviver his daughter and half of his cattle. So he became rich and prosperous. One day his former companion came to see him, found out the secret of his recovery and prosperity, and said, "O my Good One, take me to the dark, dense forest and leave me there! Perchance to me, as well as to thee, may it be given to become a man of mark. Thy two eyes did I take from thee, both thine ears did I take, and I left thee in the forest; there didst thou become a right fortunate man. Now then do

* Proben der Volksliteratur der türkischen Stämme Süd-Siberiens, iii. 344.

thou also put out my two eyes, cut off both my ears, and take me to the forest where I left thee, and leave me there." So the good man did as he was requested, and the earless, eyeless bad man remained in the forest alone. But when "the fox, the wolf, and the tiger, all three together, examined the interior of the forest, there, at a certain spot, they found the bad man, and they all three ate him up. 'From good comes good, and from evil comes evil,' said they all three, and ate him up."

This story is very popular in Russia, Afanasief giving in his collection no less than seven different variants of it. In the introduction to one of these (i. 10) considerable modern additions to the original narrative have been made. Two wayfarers dispute as to whether it is better to live honestly or dishonestly, and refer the question to three men whom they successively meet on the way. The first is a peasant who is ploughing his lord's land. He affirms that it is impossible for rustics to live honestly, for if they do not use deceit their masters will work them so hard that they will have no time to give to their own fields. The next person they meet is a merchant, who gives his opinion that in commerce dishonesty is much better than honesty—"People cheat us, and we cheat also." Next comes a species of law clerk, and he also decides in favour of dishonesty, adding "For honesty they'll send you to Siberia, saying you're a pettifogger." In spite of all this the upholder of honesty still maintains his opinion, but all goes ill with him. After a time, in order to get a morsel of bread, he is obliged to allow his antagonist to blind him. In his distress he prays to God: "O Lord, desert not me, thy sinful servant!" Then a voice is heard from heaven telling him what to do in order to recover his eyesight. After this the story proceeds in the usual way.

Next in importance to the Moral and Mythological Stories come the numerous tales which appear to have had no higher purpose than to amuse their hearers, or at most to exercise their ingenuity. Riddles were always extremely popular in the East, and some of the stories turning upon their use have made their way westward. From the same quarter, also, seem to have come a number of tales propounding some other kind of problem. A specimen of each class may be taken as illustrations of the effect produced by time and travel upon a story, of

the extent to which its original incidents may be altered, and at the same time of the vitality which some stories possess, the tenacity with which they cling to an idea or an expression, even after it has become so much the worse for wear that the substitution of a new one might be expected. These specimens come from the West of Scotland, where tales which have been transmitted from Asia are likely to prove less intelligible than their variants in Eastern Europe.

One of Mr. Campbell's Tales (No. 17b) is to the following effect. There were two brothers, each of whom had a son. One of them died, leaving his son to the other's care. When the orphan boy grew up, he dreamed one night of "the most beautiful lady there was in the world," and resolved to marry her. So he borrowed money from his uncle, and went in search of her. At length he found her in London, of which city her father was the Baillie, described his dream to her, and discovered that she also had dreamed of him. She told him to go home for a year, and then come back to marry her. He did as he was bid. And on his way to London the second time he met a Sassanach gentleman, who asked him why he was going there, saying that he was himself on his way to marry the Baillie of London's daughter. The lad replied : " When I was there last I set a net in the street, and I am going to see if it is as I left it. If it is well, I will take it with me ; if not, I will leave it." Afterwards the two wayfarers came to a river, across which the Highlander carried the Sassanach. When they reached London the Sassanach gentleman went to the Baillie's house. There he described his Scotch fellow-traveller, particularly mentioning his absurd statement about the net. The girl guessed at once who the youth was. So she left her father's house and married her Highland lover.

Now let us turn to a Russian variant of the tale (Afanasief, v. 49). There were once two merchants. The one lived at Moscow, the other at Kief. To the former was born a girl and to the latter a boy. And the two fathers agreed that the children should marry one another, so the two infants were formally betrothed, the boy's father paying down a large sum of money as a pledge. Eighteen years passed by, and no further intercourse took place between the two merchants. At the end of that time the Moscow man, hearing nothing from his Kief friend,

promised his daughter's hand to a colonel. Just about that time the Kief merchant sent his son to Moscow to look after his betrothed. On the way he came to a river over which there was a difficulty in crossing. At that moment up came a stranger, who turned out to be the colonel who was to marry the Moscow merchant's daughter. "Why are you going to Moscow?" asked the colonel. "There is a lake there," replied the youth. "In that lake eighteen years ago, my father set a snare. And now he has sent me there with these directions: 'If a duck has fallen into the snare, then bring away the duck; but if there be no duck, then bring back the snare.'" After which he enabled the colonel to cross the river. On his arrival in Moscow the colonel went to the merchant's house, where he described the youth and his riddle. The girl guessed who the youth was, and sent her maid to inquire after him. When she had ascertained that he was really her betrothed, she said to her father, "Your proposed bridegroom does not suit me; I have my old sweetheart here. With his father were hands struck together, was an agreement made fast." So the colonel was sent away, and the betrothed children became man and wife.

The commencement of the Russian form of the story is evidently far more reasonable than that of the Gaelic, the betrothal of the children giving a better reason for the girl's behaviour than the double dream. And so is its termination. For the Russian father gives his consent to his daughter's marriage in consequence of an appeal to his conscience. But the Baillie of London is tricked into giving his daughter away. "It is the law of this country," said that young lady to her lover, "that no one must be married unless the Baillie himself gives her by the hand to her bridegroom." And this the Baillie is induced to do, unaware that the disguised damsel whom he gives away is his daughter. This finale, as well as the incident of the double dream, seems to be due to another Eastern tale. One of the stories of the Tooti Nameh (24th Evening) tells how the infant son of one vizier was betrothed to the infant daughter of another. And the children grew up together, and studied in the same school. But, just as their wedding was about to take place, the King ordered the girl's father to give her in marriage to one of his officials. The lovers were in despair. But there was an

old custom of the country, in accordance with which a bride, on the evening of her wedding day, was expected to go out to a certain holy place, and there to remain alone and pray. Advantage was taken of this by the lovers, the bride escaped from the holy place, her brother having disguised himself in her wedding garments and passed himself off for her, and all went well.

The other Scotch story is that told by an old man to the three brothers of the tale of "The Inheritance" (Campbell, No. 19). Two lovers were betrothed, but poverty postponed their marriage. Meantime the girl's father compelled her to marry a rich suitor. On the wedding-night the bridegroom found the bride in tears, and asked her why she wept. She "told him all about it, and how she was pledged to another man." Whereupon he took her in her wedding-dress, and left her at the house of her betrothed. But he, not to be outdone in generosity, fetched a priest, and in his presence, "loosed the woman from the pledge she had given, and he gave a line of writing that she was free, and he set her on the horse and said: 'Now return to thy husband.' " On her way back she was stopped by three robbers in a wood. But when they had heard her story one of them said: "Come, as the others have done this, I will take you to your home myself." And he kept his word, refusing, moreover, to take the money she offered him; but his companions took it instead. The three brothers to whom this story was narrated had been left a sum of gold by their father, who ordered them to divide it fairly among them. But, before the division could take place, one of them stole the whole of it. The old man, being requested to name the thief, told the story of the betrothed lovers to the three brothers, and then asked them which of the actors in it had behaved the best. The eldest decided in favour of the husband who gave up his wife to her betrothed, and the second in favour of the betrothed who restored her to her husband. But the youngest said that "the wisest of all were the robbers who got the money." Whereupon the old man decided that the youngest brother must be the thief.

This story, as Dr. Reinhold Köhler has pointed out, is merely a well-known Eastern romance which occurs in the Arabian Nights, the Forty Viziers, the Tooti Nameh, and elsewhere; and Prof. Benfey has

indicated (*Gott. gel. Anz.* 1858, pt. 55) the Sanskrit originals both of the story and the framework in which it is set. In the Turkish Tooti Nameh (Rosen, i. 243) it takes the following form.

A man who was carrying a jewel as a present to a king was robbed of it on the way. His suspicions fell upon three of his travelling companions, but he said nothing to them about his loss. When the king's daughter heard what had happened, she sent for those three men, and told them a story. In Damascus, she said, once lived a fair maiden, who so greatly admired a rose which she saw one day in a garden, that she promised she would grant any wish expressed by the person who should obtain it for her. Thereupon the gardener brought her the rose, and said his wish was that she would visit him in the garden upon her wedding day, after the marriage ceremony was over. And she promised so to do. After a while she was married, and, when the ceremony was over and she was left alone with her husband, she told him of her promise to the gardener. Thereupon he, "into whose mind falsehood and deceit had never entered," told her to keep her promise, but to come back quickly. So she went forth in her wedding array, covered with gold and jewels, to the garden, where the gardener was impatiently awaiting her arrival. On the way she successively encountered a wolf which wanted to eat her and a robber who wanted to plunder her. But first to the beast and then to the man she told the story of her promise, and how her husband had given her leave to keep it. And the minds of the wolf and the robber were so affected by her tale that each of them allowed her to pass on untouched. So she reached the garden safely, and told the gardener what had occurred. And when he had heard of her husband's respect for her plighted word, and of the generous abstinence of the wolf and the robber, he also was touched and respectfully escorted her back unharmed to the dwelling of her husband, with whom she lived happily ever after. Having told this story to the three travellers, the princess asked which of the actors in it seemed to them to have behaved the best. Then one replied that the wolf must have been old and toothless, otherwise it would have been mere folly on its part to let slip such a prey; and another said that the robber must have been an utter idiot to act as he did; and the third expressed a

similar opinion with respect to the gardener. Whereupon the princess came to the just conclusion that men who could give utterance to such sentiments must be capable of theft, and had doubtless stolen their fellow-traveller's jewel.

Many other similar instances might be brought forward of stories now current in different parts of Europe as folk-tales, preserved by oral tradition, which were centuries ago written down in Asia and imbedded in books. But those which have been given will serve to show how much caution must be exercised by collectors and commentators ; how necessary it is to compare many versions of a story, and to trace it up, so far as is possible, to its original form, before attempting to decipher its meaning, or to decide on its evidence questions relating to the early history of the people among whom it is found.

Before taking leave of the subject, let us attempt a rough classification of the contents of the best known of all collections of folk-tales, that of Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm. Of the 200 stories which it contains,* 103 may be styled non-mythological, although many of them deal with supernatural beings, and some of them are evidently based upon myths. Of these 103, we may call 50 comic. The largest groups into which the comic tales separate are one of thirteen stories about simpletons, mostly of the Gothamite class ; and another of nine, describing various forms of trickery. There are five exaggeration tales of the Munchausen type ; four jests about women ; four stories explaining the origin of some animal peculiarity or the like ; and three jokes about laziness. The remaining twelve may be arranged under nine different headings. The class of what may be called "ingenious devices" contains eight stories, most of which are unimportant. To the didactic or moral branch may be assigned forty-three tales. Of these eleven are animal tales ; five belong to the "grateful beasts" cycle ; and five to the group of stories in which good and bad conduct are contrasted and recompensed ; two are in praise of filial reverence and two of industry ; and two show that "murder will out." The remaining sixteen illustrate as many different wise saws or moral

* Exclusive of the Appendix of ten *Kinderlegenden*, and also of the variants given in Bd. III.

axioms. There are also two robber tales, which demand a separate place.

If we turn to the far more important mythological division, we find that its ninety-seven tales may be arranged as follows :—The heading of “Husk Myths” may be given to a group of ten stories, of a species which has already been described, two of them telling the tale of Beauty and the Beast, and two that of the Frog Spouse. Various metamorphoses, of a different character from the changes of shape described in the “Husk Myths,” form the subject of thirteen other transformation stories. With these two groups may be classed, under the general heading of “Magic and Witchcraft,” twelve tales, in which the actors employ spells, or are assisted by such magic implements as seven-leagued boots and the like, or by such magic helpers as Fine-Ear and his associates. To the group of tales for which the heading of “Eclipse Myths” has been suggested may be assigned sixteen stories. Three of these narrate the similar adventures of Cinderella and Aller-leirauh, and four those of the Sleeping Beauty. More than once occur also the stories of the heroines, whom, for the sake of convenience, we may style the “Calumniated Wife” and the “Supplanted Bride,” and of the brilliant being who for a time hides from sight the splendour of “Goldenlocks.” As probable nature-myths there may be classed with these stories of eclipse four tales relating to destruction and restoration—tales in which the dead are brought to life, or the old are made young. In almost all mythological stories demons, or wizards and witches connected with demons, naturally play a part. But in some of them the demon, or his human representative, figures so prominently that it may be convenient to draw them up under his banner. They refer, of course, to female as well as male demoniacal beings, but for the moment we may assume that the demon is of the male sex. Of such “Demon Stories” we have at present thirty-one to deal with. These may be arranged in groups referring to such subjects as the following : The Demon’s Abode, as in Beanstalk Stories wherein the heroes who seek him or his victims have to climb, or as in tales about hostile dwarfs whom they have to follow underground ; or his physical characteristics, such as his possessing Three Golden Hairs, or being one-eyed like Polyphemus, or “having no heart in his body”

like Punchkin; or his tendency to annoy women, who are like Andromeda exposed, or like Rapunzel immured, or like Proserpine carried off. But the largest group will always be that of tales referring to the demon's struggles with mankind, in which he is ultimately worsted, being either destroyed, or at least robbed, tricked, or otherwise humiliated. Certain supernatural beings will probably require to be treated separately. The collection with which we are dealing, for instance, contains two stories about elves or fairies, and two about the Three Fates. There remain to be dealt with seven as yet unclassified tales. Two of them belong to the large class of stories about the dead. Two describe the career of Thumbling, a hero whose mythological significance has not yet been definitely ascertained; * one refers to the puzzling myth of the Golden Goose; one is based upon the belief that snakes have to do with treasures; and one accounts for the existence of the Moon. The themes named in this rough approximation towards a classification are of course illustrated by many stories besides those assigned to each of them; for almost all the tales deal with many subjects in addition to that which has been selected as their characteristic for classifying purposes.

W. R. S. RALSTON.

* A strong case in favour of his being identified with a small star known as the "Conductor" of "Charles's Wain," has been made out by M. Gaston Paris, in his excellent monograph entitled "*Le Petit Poucet et la Grande Ourse*." (Paris, 1875.)

THE FOLK-LORE OF FRANCE.



THE folk-lore of a nation comprehends all the "culture," if the term may be used, that the people has created out of its own resources. The official religion, and the printed or written literature of a people, may have their germs in what was once folk-lore, in the store of ideas and traditions which, as far as our knowledge goes, may be called universal. There is a point at which we lose ourselves in the attempt to trace usages and stories to their source. We cannot even guess how the human fancy first invented these possible seeds of all mythology, the *märchen* or nursery tales which we heard from our own nurses, which are taken from the mouths of the crones of savage tribes, and which meet us again, transfigured and splendid, in the highest poetry of the German and Celtic races, or are breathed to us "softly, through the flutes of the Grecians." When one investigates the folk-lore of a modern nation like France, one asks (1) how much do the people of the nation retain of the primitive store; (2) how have they handled it, what impress of the peculiar national genius have they lent to ideas which are common to them with the rest of the world? Thus in France it is desirable to study the poetry of the people, the ballads handed from mother to child, without break, from an antiquity in which no one cared to know or remember the name of the author. How much of this treasure of ballads is common to other European peoples, and what again is the peculiar note of French, as distinguished from Romaic, Spanish, Scotch, Danish, German, and other folk-songs? The same question occurs as to *märchen* or fairy tales. Are the fairy tales of France refined and courtly, as they might be if borrowed from Perrault's and Madame D'Aulnoy's

collections, or are they homely, like the Irish and Scotch nursery legends; or grandiose, imaginative, and confused, like the Gaelic stories; or humorous and kindly, like those which Sir G. Dasent translated from the Norse; or savage, like Castren's Samoyede examples; or full of such strange seven-headed monsters as the Slavonic narrators delight in? How many of the old "radicals" or fictitious "formulæ" noted by Von Hahn and others remain? What has the native French taste added to or taken away from the *märchen* as Tartars and Zulus, and modern and ancient Greeks know or knew them? Questions of the same sort present themselves when we think of superstitious beliefs and superstitious ceremonies. How much is borrowed from the Church by the people, what has the people lent to the Church, what remains of the earliest rituals and of the observances of fetishism, of paganism, of solar worship, or of the cult of animals? If we had knowledge and skill enough we might find, in the study of these problems, the spiritual history of the French people. We should see them in their points of contact with other examples of humanity, from the naked Maori to the English peasant. We should be able to say to what extent the people are really impressed by the teaching of the learned classes and the priesthood. We should even know how far the character of the natives of one part of France differs from that of the natives of another district; we should detect the influence of the Provençal and the Teutonic genius, of the Celt and of the Roman. In this place, and with the rather scanty materials at command, it is only possible to sketch a work on French folk-lore.

SUPERSTITIOUS USAGES.

In considering the native culture of a people, it is perhaps least unscientific to begin with religion or superstition. The French peasant is religious enough *au fond*, and politicians are only beginning to teach him to vote against the *curé*. It is not, however, of the official but of the traditional religion and ritual that we have to think at this moment. The two things, it is true, are hard to disentangle. Not easily can one determine in every case whether the Church borrowed some rural rite from popular paganism, or whether popular

paganism distorted and degraded the ceremony of the Church. For example, when the *curé* of a little Breton village leads his choristers, in a solemn procession, on Saint Anne's Day, and devoutly burns an old boat, to the prow of which a serpent is made fast, whether is the sacrifice kept up in memory of Saint Anne, or to appease the shadow of some earlier serpentine godhead? It is difficult always to decide, but one may be sure that the ceremonies of Saint John's Eve, at least, have no necessary connection with Saint John. Many English people have seen Jules Breton's picture of the sturdy peasant girls dancing round the smoke and fire,—the fire of which the sacred seeds were handed down by the earliest religion. The night of Saint John is haunted in all the popular songs by young men and maidens straying home from the fires that once were lit to a god no kindlier than Moloch. Some forty years ago a girl was actually burned to death in one of those *rondes*. The sentiment of the *volks-lieder* lingers gladly on chance meetings in the midsummer twilight, when the lover sees the beloved on the dim banks of the river, and sings to her—

“ O beau pommier, beau pommier,
 Qu'est si chargé de fleurs,
 Que mon cœur d'amour.
 Il ne faut qu'un petit vent
 Pour envoler ces fleurs,
 Il ne faut qu'un jeune amant
 Pour me gagner le cœur.”

Superstitions of the usual sort are attached to other great days of the Church. The water that flows from the wells while the bells ring on Easter Day is supposed to have a magical virtue. The sun himself dances on Easter morn, and the golden and scarlet hues of dawn are taken to be the wings of exultant angels. The beliefs connected with the dead are of the ordinary kind. The mattress on which any one dies is to be burned, sometimes at cross-roads; the water in the house must be poured out of pitchers and glasses (as among the Jews), lest the flying soul drown itself. In some places in the department of the Vosges, the ashes of the burned mattress are allowed to lie on the ground all night, and, if in the morning the trace of a foot-

step is found among them, it is supposed that the dead has returned, perhaps to declare that he is in purgatory, and to demand the prayers of his friends. When one adds to these beliefs the custom of sacrificing a cock when a family takes possession of a new house, it is plain that remains of very early "animistic" and religious ideas survive among the peasantry. As to the superstition about the difficulties which attend the flight of souls, it certainly existed in the South of France in the seventeenth century. Thus in *L'Examen de las Supersticius*, a theological tract, the penitent is asked whether he has ever removed the roof from a sick man's hut, that the soul might more easily fly away!

An immense number of French superstitious practices differ only in name from those recorded in English books like that of Brand. Call the yule log *cosse de Nau*, and translate the usages connected with the yule log into French, and you have something very like M. Laisnel de la Salle's first chapter on *Fêtes Populaires (Croyances et Legendes du Centre de la France*. Paris, 1875). M. de la Salle connects these Christmas rites with the Aryan worship of Agni, but they are human rather than Aryan, and may be found in Peru as well as in Berry. French Christmas carols are pretty enough, and in tone much resemble our own popular ditties of the sacred season. Thus the shepherd sings—

"Colin, au milieu de la nuit
Je vois le soleil qui reluit;
Il semble que tout reverdit."

The *soleil* may be the Christian or the secular sun, and the feast of the winter solstice with its heathen observances was easily converted into the most solemn festival of the Christian year. The *Nœls* or Christmas carols make some confusion between the two religions. It is superfluous to add that the dumb animals are supposed to have the power of speech on Christmas eve. As for *le bœuf gras*, M. de la Salle finds him in Chinese religion no less than in that of Berry. Not race, but the natural allegorical rites with which men celebrate the return of spring, the hope of harvest, the memory of the dead, all the chief events of the solar year, and of mundane life, produce these re-

semblances in ritual. In France the Church has lent a Christian colour to a dozen survivals of fetishism and nature-worship, and mere primitive custom. The feast of *les brandons* is still purely rustic,—it is the lustration of the fields. Thus Tibullus says, “Gods of our land, faithful to the ancient rites which our fathers bequeathed to us, we purify our fields, our fruits,—do ye deign to drive all evil from our dwelling; destroy the tares among the wheat,” and so forth. The lustration is performed by French peasants on the first Sunday in Lent. Soon after sunset all the people of a village rush through closes, meadows, and vineyards, armed with lighted torches, till hill and plain seem to swarm with will-o’-the-wisps. There are many ditties which are sung at this ceremony.

“Taupes et mulots
Sortez de mes clos,
Ou je vous casse les os.”

Now this ceremony is, in conception, magical. Fire and song are to consecrate the crops, and drive away spiritual and mortal forms of evil. The sorcerers of the New Caledonian tribes take similar precautions in the new-sown plots of yam and taro roots. The Romans had the rite, as we have seen, and the thing to notice is, that, while the people of Berry preserve the essence of the primeval ceremony, they have added to the songs, in the mocking spirit of *gauloiserie*, a satire against the *curés*. Moles, toads, moths are addressed thus—

“Laissez pousser nos blés
Courez cheux les curés
Dans leurs caves vous auriez
A boire autant qu’à manger.”

Here, then, we have a typical instance of the value of the study of folk-lore. You see the element of human sameness, the unchanging character of the peasant’s life, the same narrow round of hopes and fears in which men move to-day, as four thousand years ago—men modern and ancient, men savage and men civilised. On the other hand, you see the element of national difference, the mocking, revolutionary spirit of France, as displayed in the satire on the poor *curés*, whose store, after all, could not support many moles or resist much mildew. Like most

rural feasts, that of *les brandons* ends with a distribution of sacred cakes, like the *liba* of the Romans, and the cakes of Leviticus ii. 7, and of the Hindoos. Corn and bread seem to have so strongly impressed the early imagination with their mystic significance, that they enter, according to the Père Lafitau, into the marriage service of the Iroquois, as into the sacrament of the Christian. One might occupy the whole space of this article with a mere enumeration of the rural feasts of boughs, of the remnants of the worship of trees, of customs connected with Easter eggs, of the dances in which girls scatter flowers of spring, and chant an ancient ballad burden, whereof the meaning is lost, so that only the words “grand soule, p’tit soule” (great sun, and little sun) can be understood.

One must be content with a reference to M. Laisnel de la Salle’s collection of facts (his *theories*, like all our theories, must be received with hesitation), and to the rural novels of George Sand. There the curious can read about the *fées*, or fairies; the *grande-bête*—a shapeless flying terror of the night; the spectres who wash dead men’s bodies by moonlight; the were-wolves; and *le meneur des loups*, a wizard whom the wolves follow in his darkling walks; the *herbe qui égare*, a herb with powers the reverse of those attributed to the Homeric *moly*, being a plant of which the fragrance turns the traveller from his path. Here you learn how to guard your health from witchcraft; how to see a vision of your future husband; where “Arthur’s hunt” may be met; where the Druid stones dance round the Virgin Mary;—information about all these matters and their ancient analogues M. Laisnel de la Salle has compiled. His book is more interesting than *Mélusine*, a useful collection of folk-lore edited by MM. Gaidoz and Rolland. He studies in a scientific spirit the facts which George Sand observed with romantic curiosity.

FRENCH BALLADS OR VOLKSLIEDER.

France is a country which we might expect to be particularly rich in popular songs. The people are not only a singing but a dancing people, and a ballad, as its name implies, was originally a song chanted as an accompaniment of the dance. Even now numbers of

rondes are danced by the country people, who accompany themselves with words which, as a rule, have little meaning. Here is a very fair specimen of the *ronde* :

“ A la claire fontaine
Devant le palais du Roi
Il vint trois demoiselles,
Se baigner devant moi
Rossignol n’a pas d’amour
Chantons la nuit et le jour.”

Most *rondes* are as senseless as this; they have always a great deal to say about “three girls to give away,” about “three ducks,” “three captains,” and so forth. They seldom contain more than the germ of a story, in fact they have become childish, and have lost sentiment and significance. The popular muse of France must not be judged by the majority of extant dance-songs. More excellent ballads, mirthful or doleful, still survive from the time when, in default of written or printed literature, the people were their own poets. The ballad-store of France does not contain songs so spirited as *Kinmont Willie* or *Dick of the Cow*, or the other narrative poems of border war. The people were not so well off nor so well led as the ancestors of our Roxburghshire and Liddesdale farmers who “rode with the bold Buccleugh.” Their chants are the expressions of a race of men always passive, if not always suffering. They made no raids, but raids enough were made on them by the English and the Companies. Of these misfortunes scarcely a trace remains in song, except perhaps in a long ballad which tells how an English king carried off a French maiden, who died, in answer to her prayer, on her bridal night. Again, the French ballads lack the superstitious as well as the adventurous spirit of the songs of Scotland, Denmark, and Greece. There is a Provençal ballad, indeed, on a theme widely known, that of the dead mother who returns to help her children, misused by a harsh stepmother. After seven years she goes back to the grave, the children following in a sad little procession. That apparition seems to me one of the most touching and “gruesome” in all ballad lore.

“ ’Twas late in the night and the bairns grat,
The mother beneath the moults heard that,”

says a scrap of a Yorkshire lay preserved by Emily Brontë. Miss Brontë did not know, perhaps, that the song of the mother's ghost was so widely spread—to Denmark and to sunny Provence. I have never had the good fortune to discover the remainder of the modern English song. The Provençal one is in the collection of M. Damase Arbaud. The superstition of metamorphosis into animal form is illustrated by the Normandy ballad of the White Doe. A mother walks with her daughter in the forest; the girl confides to her that every ninth night she is turned into a white doe and pursued by her brother's hounds. Then the brother is brought on the scene, ignorant, of course, of his sister's trouble, and boasting that his hounds will catch the doe the next time they are laid on her track. His boast is fulfilled, and he discovers too late "the maid's gold hair among the white deer's blood." I have translated this ballad into prose in an article on French Peasant Songs (*Cornhill Magazine*, May, 1876). Another even more gloomy ballad may be selected from M. de Puymaigre's *Chants Populaires du Pays Messin*:

" LA DAMNÉE.

" C'est d'une fille et d'un garçon,
D'un garçon qui l'a bien aimée.
Mais bientôt sous le vert gazon,
La belle fille est enterrée.

" Le garçon fit une prière
A la bonne vierge Marie,
Pour qu'elle lui fasse voir encore
La belle qu'il a tant chérie.

" Il n'a pas fini sa prière
Et voilà la belle arrivée.
Oh! la belle, la belle, où avez vous été
Que vos fraîches couleurs ont si fort changé

" Ce sont les diables et les enfers
Qui ont ainsi rongé mes membres,
Et cela pour un maudit péché
Que nous avons commis ensemble.

" Oh, dites-moi, dites, ma mie,
Ne peut on pas vous soulager,
Avec quelques messes à dire
Ou quelques vigiles à chanter?

“ Oh ! non, mon bel ami, oh ! non,
 Oh ! non, ne m'en faites point dire,
 Tant plus prieras ton dieu pour moi
 Et tant plus souffrirai martyr.

“ Oh, adieu donc, adieu, ma mie,
 Puis qu'il faut ainsi vous quitter.
 A votre soeur Marguerite
 N'avez vous rien à envoyer?

“ Tu diras à ma sœur Marguerite
 Qu'elle ne fasse pas comme moi.
 Que jamais elle ne se promène
 Sur le soir dans les grands bois.”

Except these I have met no French ballads of deep superstitious gloom, and even the last of these seems coarse and creeping when compared to “Clerk Saunders,” or to more than one of the Romaic folk-songs about “the dead that ride with speed,” about Charon the terrible wrestler, and his gloomy home, whence none may escape. In the popular songs of the modern Greeks you find this wild poetry in its utmost perfection. It is the voice of a *natur-volk* unspoiled by civilization and yet capable of the highest culture. In France the peasant's fancy is stinted and curbed, yet, even in France, he often tells in his verse the same tale, and uses the same formulæ, as the more intensely imaginative Scotch and Dane, as the Spaniard, as the Greek of Thessaly, or of the isles. The sameness of plot in the narrative ballads of European peoples is a very notable thing. It is remarkable, too, that the songs do not use the plots and incidents of the *märchen* (as a rule), but have a separate set of their own.

What the favourite plots and situations are, I shall try to show from a few French examples. The ballad of John of Tours, or, as it is called in some variants, of *Le Roi Renaud*, is easily accessible to English readers, for Mr. Rossetti has translated it very admirably. A wounded man returns from the war, and in reply to the caresses of his mother, who tells him that his wife has borne a son, he only asks that his bed may be made. Then follows a second dialogue between the mother and daughter-in-law; the latter hears the pre-

parations for her husband's burial, and her questions are put off with feigned answers. At last the mother cries:

“ Ma fille je ne puis le cacher
Le Roi Renaud est décédé ! ”

The wife dies of grief, or, in other versions, goes into a convent. Now it must be noticed that this ballad, with its three persons, and these couplets of questions and reply, is really a little drama. In the shape of a child's rhyme, it still survives, much mutilated, but recognisable in Scotland.—(Chambers's *Popular Rhymes of Scotland*.)

Now turn from the puerile sing-song of the Lowlands to Brittany, and you find the lay of the Seigneur Nann, who returns to his wife in evil case, not after a lost battle, but after repelling the love of a fairy. The dialogue between the wife and the mother-in-law follows as a matter of course. (Villemarqué, *Barzaz Breiz*, i. p. 43.) Brittany thus retains a mark of a famous and very primitive superstition, the belief in the deadly love of the spectral forest women. So wide-spread is this superstition, that a friend of mine declares he has met with it among the savages of New Caledonia, and has known a native who actually died, as he himself said he would, after meeting one of the fairy women of the wild wood. In *Le Roi Renaud*, then, we have the intermediate form of a popular song. It has not sunk to the decadence of its surviving Scotch form,—it has lost the tragic *aberglaube* which the Celtic memory preserves. In the villages, where *Le Roi Renaud* has become *Jean Renaud*, a wounded soldier, we see, perhaps, the degradation of the legend. The same plot is found in the Venetian folk-song “Conte Anzolin,” where the hero is neither wounded in war nor bewitched by a fairy, but simply bitten by a mad dog! I owe these variants to M. de Puymaigre (*Chants Populaires dans le Pays Messin*). The legend is not found, to my knowledge, in German, Danish, or Romaic popular song, but probably other readers may have met with it in these languages.

The ballad of *Germaine* (Puymaigre) turns on the most widely spread of all fictitious motives—the motive of the Odyssey—the return of a long-lost husband to his faithful wife, who does not recognize him

and dreads imposture. This situation, with features curiously like those of the meeting of Odysseus and Penelope, is found in the folklore of China. Penelope, Germaine, and the Chinese lady are all incredulous and demand a sign.

“ Loyez, loyez, Germaine,
Pour Dieu, votre mari !
Encor n’y croirais-je pas
Que vous êtes mon mari
Ou bien vous me direz
Quel jour je fus épousée.

J’ai épousé Germaine
Le matin, le lundi.
Encor ne croirais-je pas
Que vous êtes mon mari,
Ou bien vous me direz,
Ce qui m’est arrivé.

C’est arrivé, Germaine,
Que votre anneau rompit ;
En voilà la moitié,
Montre la votre aussi.
Ouvrez, ouvrez, Germaine,
Ouvrez à votre ami.”

Ὡς ἂρ ἔφη πόσιος πειρωμένη, we might go on, in the words of the scene of recognition in the *Odyssey* (xxiii. 181). We may be tolerably sure that the return of Odysseus to Penelope was the theme of a rustic lay like *Germaine*, among the early Achæans, before the author of the *Odyssey* made it the chief thread in his divine poem. Folk-songs indeed are the “wild stock” whence the epic and the artistic lyric sprang. They are far older than the most ancient poetry of Greece, just as the wild white rose represents an earlier type of flowers than the complex blossoms of the garden. In a volume which I have not seen, but which is quoted by M. de Puymaigre, the modern Romaic lay on the return of the husband is printed (*Chants Populaires de la Grèce*, translated by Marcellus). The motive is found in Tyrolese and German ballads. One may remark, in taking leave of *Germaine*, that it contains a trait of very primitive hospitality, well known to the student of savage manners. Survivals of that sort are rather rare in

French popular songs; here are two verses, however, which might have been taken from a Bulgarian *pesma*.

Votre amant s'est marié
Avec une Flamande;
Elle n'est pas si riche que vous,
Mais elle est plus puissante.
Elle fait venir le soleil
A minuit dans sa chambre,
Elle fait bouiller la marmite
Sans feu et sans rente.

(Puymaigre, p. 31.) This familiarity with the sun and this magical skill are common enough among Bulgarian girls, if one may trust the ballads in M. Dozon's interesting collection. *La Maitresse Captive* is the French form of the *Gay Goss-hawk* in the Border Minstrelsy. A girl pretends to be dead, that she may be carried by her kinsmen to the chapel where she is to meet her lover:

Le fils du roi passant par là
Crie tout haut;—Curés, arrêtez,
C'est ma mie que vous emportez,
Ah, laissez moi la regarder.
Il prit ses ciseaux d'or fin
Et décousit ses draps de lin;
Mais pendant qu'il les décousait
Voilà la belle le reconnaît.

There has been a good deal of natural scepticism about the ballads which, like the *Gay Goss-hawk*, were published by Scott. Either he himself or the people who furnished him with copies often dressed up the fragments, and inserted original lines and couplets. It may be taken for almost certain, however, that when Scott gives us a ballad of which variants exist in French, Danish, and Romaic, the groundwork, at least, of that poem is a genuine portion of the popular store common to the people in all European countries. How the store of legends and of poetical *formulæ* came to be thus the general inheritance of the peasant it is not now possible to guess. Like the problem of the origin and dispersion of *märchen*, the mystery must be left to Time, "which discovers all things." Did the Scotch borrow *The Bonny Hind* (giving that appalling song a tragic gloom it does not possess in France) from

L'Épreuve (Puymaigre, pp. 54, 59)? That hypothesis does not account for the presence of the same simple and terrible situation in the Finnish epic the *Kalewala*. Or shall we say that the popular imagination naturally caught at the most moving yet obvious themes which are everywhere equally powerful to awaken terror and compassion? That theory does not account for the *verbal* resemblance between *Renaud et ses Quatorze Femmes* and the Scotch *May Colvin*, which have their parallels in Breton, Venetian, Piedmontese, German, Wendish, Bohemian, and Servian ballad-poetry.

Are we to say that the legends are based on some historical fact, and spread through Europe from a common centre? To take a more lively example—did we borrow *Billy Taylor* from the French, or did the French first sing of the betrayed and revengeful maiden?

Derrière cheux nous
 Y est un capitaine
 [Billy Taylor was a fine young fellow,
 Full of mirth and full of glee],
 Qui tous les jours
 M'entretient de ses amours.,
 [And his mind he did discover
 To a maiden fair and free].

The legend pursues its course. The capitaine loves and rides away, but the lady follows him to the army and provokes him to a duel;

“ Ah oui, ah oui,
 Ils ont bien pris les armes,
 Ah oui, ah oui,
 Ils ont bien combattu,
 Mais la fillette,
 Qu'était encor jeunette
 Mais la fillette
 Mit son amant a mort.”

In fact “she shot young Billy Taylor.” “And the king, when he came for to hear of it, very much applauded what she had done,” but it does not appear that he made her “first lieutenant of the gallant Thunder-bomb.”

“ Le roi si bon
 Y accorda son pardon.”

The adventure is said to exist in Slavonic poetry. Speaking of coin-

cidences, it may be worth noticing that the "Fause Foodrage," the traitor in a Scotch ballad, seems to recur as the Fordresse of a song in which a villain kills his mistress,

"J'ai tué ma pastourelle,
La plus belle fille du pays."

M. Auricoste de Lazarque suggests that "Fordresse," in the lips of German girls, is "an alteration of *faux-traitre*, words which are often repeated in popular songs and stories."

Before leaving the ballad poetry of France, it may be well to draw attention to the vast number of songs of the army, and of songs about deserters. As in Russia, the conscription has greatly exercised the muse of the people. Another large class of ballads deals with the adventures of pretty shepherdesses, who get the better of adventurous knights. These songs may be derived from the *pastourelles* of the thirteenth century, of which Bartsch has published a collection; or ancient popular songs of this kind may have given the key-note to the artistic poets who brought *pastourelles* into fashion. Taking French ballads as a whole, counting *rondes*, lullabies, marriage-songs, and the songs of the labourers, one finds a good deal of babbling gaiety, some trace of dreary superstition, much love of the spring, and of the songs of birds, scattered memories of the oppression of the *ancien régime*, and, now and again, an accent of deeper melancholy and weariness of labour. Thus, in the labourer's song:—

Qu'il pleue, qu'il vente, qu'il neige,
Orage ou autre temp,
On voit toujours sans cesse
Le laboureur aux champs.

Le pauvre laboureur
N'ayant que deux enfants
Les a mis à la charrue
A l'âge de dix ans.

(*Mélusine*, col. 458, 459.)

You must not ask this people for the rich sentiment or the patriotic war-song of the Greek mountaineer, for the tragedy that captivates the fancy, and the riding-song that stirs the blood, of the Scot,

by the “dowie dene of Yarrow,” or by the “wan water” that Buccleugh swam at the head of his horsemen. The French peasant sings little of the deeds of knights and princes, whom he does not love, but is busy with the scanty experience of his own life, his brief years of youth, his long acquaintance with labour, his fear of the final doom,

“Tant plus prieras ton Dieu pour moi
Et tant plus souffrirai martyre.”

POPULAR TALES.

The popular tales of France, the *märchen* which France shares with most other known peoples, have not yet, so far as I am aware, been collected and published with method and system. For some years the story of *Tord-chêne*, in *Les Filles de Feu* of Gérard de Nerval, was the only rustic version of a French *märchen* which I had the fortune to meet with. In the old collections of Perrault and of Madame D'Aulnoy the characters have been attired in court dress, and it is not always possible to tell what the writers have borrowed directly from Italian or Eastern sources, nor to distinguish the literary inventions from the genuine traditions. Even now I am only acquainted with the *contes* published in *Mélusine*, and with that very charming book of M. Deulin's, *Les Contes du Roi Gambrinus*. Now M. Deulin does not conceal the fact that he has told his stories (which at bottom are real traditional tales) in his own way. A most amusing and agreeable way it is; still it is plainly impossible to draw any scientific conclusion from *Les Contes du Roi Gambrinus*. The *märchen* in *Mélusine*, on the other hand, profess to be derived from the lips of the people. The narrators, however, were not, in all cases, quite unsophisticated. You must go, with Mr. Campbell, to Barra, or “where the great peaks look abroad over Skye to the westernmost islands,” if you want to get the real article uncorrupted by any memory of literature. From Turkish old women too, from Von Hahn's Albanians, from Castren's Samoyedes, unsophisticated tales may be obtained. From all such natural people, the *märchen* comes undiluted, but it is easily seen that even Herr Schmidt's Ithacan and Cephalonian story-tellers have heard, however vaguely, and remember, however indistinctly, fragments of

the higher mythologies and of artistic fiction. Thus we must not hastily generalise about many of the Breton stories, even though M. Luzel reports them. There is a notable distinction, too, between Breton and French, for which reason I have deliberately avoided much mention of native Breton songs and customs. In the matter of popular tales, however, we are not lucky enough to possess much material that is not Breton, and therefore the paper must be closed with a few remarks on the tales translated and published in *Mélusine* by M. Luzel. In his *Le Lièvre, le Renard, et l'Ours*, one easily recognises a form of the common story about "grateful beasts." The peculiarity of the Breton form is its modernism. The characters are named Henri and Hénori, and so on. They go to Paris and England, and they have adventures with rather common-place robbers. There is a touch of the usual spirit of cruel revenge, which is a mark of *märchen*, in the fiery punishment of the villain with which the story ends. (*Mélusine*, col. 64.) *Les Trois Fils du Roi* (*Mélusine*, col. 65) is a variant of Puss in Boots. Here the successful youngest son has a hump-back, but he is none the less triumphant.

In Jean de l'Ours (*Mélusine* 110) we have that widely-known character of legend, the man whose father is a bear. The bear occurs in Danish royal pedigrees, and he is a totem or tribal father and friend in North America. Jean de l'Ours is a creature of huge strength, who is aided in his adventures by companions who have magical gifts. One can break mountains, another break oaks, and so forth. This is a very ancient feature in primitive fiction, and its highest artistic form, as manipulated by poets, is to be found in the Greek account of the companions of Jason and the Argonautic expedition. The framers of the cycle of Argo must apparently have amplified and decorated certain data which are found, in a ruder form, among Finns and Samoyeds, as well as in the *märchen* of the unprogressive peasant class in European countries. A version of Jean de l'Ours is given by M. Deulin in his *Contes du Roi Gambrinus*. The short fantastic story from Picardy (*Mélusine*, col. 113) of the hump-backed man who lost his hump, and of the other deformed creature who had the lost hump added to his own protuberance, is known to exist in Japan. Hence arises a controversy; some "story-comparers"

hold that the tale is an Aryan one, carried to Japan from the West by traders, soldiers, or missionaries. As the Japanese legend, however, occurs in a chap-book, as a legendary explanation of a Japanese proverb, it seems to have a natural root in the soil. It is easy to see how, human nature being what it is, identical proverbs may thus spring up in nations without being borrowed. Then a tale to explain the proverb is called for, and thus the same story might be found in France and Japan, or in the planet Venus for that matter, if mortals like us inhabit the planet Venus. The ordinary theory about the transmission of Aryan *märchen* is thwarted by the extreme savagery of certain incidents found in the nursery tales of polished nations. There are the marks of fetishism, magic, and cannibalism in our own nursery legends, and, if these originally came from India, that country must either have been peopled by savages at the time when the stories were invented, or the *märchen* fell in Europe among savages who corrupted them. This prevalence of savage survivals among *märchen*, however, is only one of several facts, which I attempted to systematise in an article on *Myths and Fairy Tales* (Fortnightly Review, May 1872). This is not the place to go more deeply into the evidences. M. Luzel's story of "The Tailor and the Hurricane" is a humorous version of the well-known *märchen* of the mule that produced gold, and of the stick that automatically beat its master's enemies. When the Tailor goes to the home of the Winds, like Odysseus to the home of Æolus, the Hurricane comes in and as good as says :

" Fee, fa, fo, fum,
I smell the blood of an Englishman ;"

or,

" Je sens odeur de Chrétien ; il y a un Chrétien ici, et il faut que je le mange.

Had Æschylus any similar Greek story of ogres who smell out man's blood in his mind when he made the Eumenides detect Orestes and cry :

" Ὅσμη βροτείων αἱμάτων με προσγελᾷ ? "

(*Eumenides*, 244.) Another Breton story, also humorous, and even broad in its *gauloiserie*, is *Les Trois Frères, ou le Chat, le Coq,*

et l'Echelle. A poor man leaves his three sons no more than a cat, a cock, and a ladder. The eldest carried his cat to such a mouse-ridden country as Dick Whittington found. The owner of the cock discovers a land where (there being no cocks) the king every night sends chariots and horses to bring the dawn. The lad with the ladder makes himself agreeable to the imprisoned wife of a jealous lord, a sort of fabulously innocent Agnès, in a mythical *École de Maris*. All three sons find fortunes and *bonnès fortunes*, and the *märchen* displays a jolly indifference to morality. The long story of *Les Trois Filles de Boulanger* mixes up the ancient fiction of a queen, who is accused of giving birth to puppies, with the "dancing water" and "singing apple" of the Arabian Nights. In all the popular stories in *Mélusine* one detects a satiric humour and a kind of worldly wisdom which are the characteristics of French *märchen*. The fancy of Celts of the Continent is certainly most unlike the wild imagination of the West Highlanders. In their tales (collected by Mr. Campbell) the ancient Celtic genius projects fantastic shapes on a back-ground of mists. You have more than the strangeness of the *Mabinogion*, you have human fancy in its wildest expression, and withal, a sentiment, a poetry, not unworthy of the ancient bards. There is nothing of all this in the positive, commonplace French and Breton *märchen*, where fancy is stunted, and incredulous wit thrusts in its word now and then, or priests and popes are introduced hap-hazard among the figures of the earliest fiction.

Looking back on the field of French folk-lore, we seem to detect more of primitive practice and superstitious usage than we have preserved in England. France escaped the full force of the Reformation, and the Catholic Church has always been tolerant of the earlier rites which she sanctified, while Puritanism persecuted even the dances of May Day. In the matter of poetry, French peasants retain little of much value, except the traditional love-songs, which have often a touch of the idyllic sentiment of the Canticles. Both in poetry and story, the peasants of France show the imaginative defects of a people which has been long in contact with the hardest side, the harshest form of civilisation. Hence a somewhat sterile fancy, a certain vulgarity, a mordant humour, and a grain of incredulity.

One misses the pleasant spontaneity and good nature of the Norse legends, the intensity of the Scotch ballad, the poetry of Celtic stories.

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A. LANG.

SOME JAPAN FOLK-TALES.

THE BEWITCHED TEA-KETTLE.



LONG time ago the priest of a Buddhist Temple at Tatebayashi, in the province of Pekin, found an old iron boiler amongst a lot of lumber, one of the kind of tea-kettles formerly used on great occasions. It looked as if it had been ill-used, it was so old and battered. But the priest was a thrifty man, and a lover of old-fashioned things; so he was looking to see what he could make use of amongst the lumber that his predecessor had left behind him. He cleaned the old kettle, and, filling it with water, set it on the fire to boil. To his great amazement it seemed to move, and the head, tail, and four legs of a badger seemed to grow out of it, before he could say the ever-ready prayer of his sect. It then jumped from the fire and tried to escape; but the priest calling to the neophyte to come and aid him, they beat the badger down with brooms and caught it, and put it into a box. Now there was a dealer in old metal in the village who was known to the priest, and the neophyte was sent to bring him to the temple, but nothing was to be said about the tricks of the pot. When the box was opened to show the dealer, it seemed to be the same old rusty, dirty thing it was before the priest cleaned it, so the dealer would not give more than about ten cents for it. The priest, however, after some attempts to obtain more for such a heavy kettle, closed the bargain, glad to be rid of it.

The dealer found it heavier to carry than he at first thought, but he managed to get it home. The same night he was awoke from his sound sleep by noises that seemed to come from the corner where he had placed the tea-kettle, but they ceased when he sat up to watch.

Fancying there might be a thief, he was cautious; and presently, in place of the pot, he saw a great badger dancing about, in a way that astonished him, skipping from place to place and balancing itself in the strangest attitudes until the poor man was quite frightened. Early the next morning he went to a friend, another old-metal dealer, and told him about the badger's tricks. This old man had heard when a child about the story of a tea-kettle that was bewitched, and he thought that perhaps the one bought from the priest might be the same. He advised his friend, therefore, to exhibit the kettle as a curiosity, for, if the badger's good will and confidence could be gained, it would bring its possessor a fortune. He also advised that no prayers should be said, or religious ceremony observed, near the place where the tea-kettle was, as such would annoy the badger and interfere with the exhibition. The dealer took his friend's advice, and, erecting a temporary building, succeeded in getting the badger to show off his tricks in public. When the tea-kettle was placed on the stage it would not move till there was a crowded audience; then, assured that every one had paid his entrance fee, it would gradually develop head, limbs, and tail, and go through the funniest performances on a tight-rope, with umbrella, fans, &c., dancing and tumbling, finally disappearing suddenly, and here the old rusty tea-kettle would be seen back on the stage again.

The dealer became a very rich man, but he feared he had incurred the wrath of Nin-rai-oama (Buddhist divinity), and he therefore made presents of money to the temples that the priests might pray for him, and avert the punishment he feared he had incurred; for, by giving up a portion of his wealth, he hoped to enjoy the remainder for many years, and be sure of a happy hereafter free of trouble. The priest who had sold the tea-kettle was a clever man, and had no difficulty in obtaining enough money to build a fine new temple, the dealer believing he was thus making the road easy for himself in the next world. There was a special place built for the tea-kettle. It was canonized, and named "Great Enlightened Spirit of Bum-buku;" and is still to be seen.

SHIPPEI TARO,

THE DOG THAT RESCUED THE MAIDEN FROM SACRIFICE.



IN the good old time, when young gentlemen were proud of the knowledge of fencing, and, not like those of this degenerate age, effeminate rakes, who spend their time dallying with dancing and singing girls, it was the custom for the young cavaliers to travel about and meet renowned swordsmen in order to practise manly accomplishments, become expert, used to hardship, and gain health and vigour.

One of these students, who was roaming about the northern province, one night lost his way in the hills, and, becoming weary and foot-sore before he could find a habitation, joyfully espied a little wayside shrine, which he found was only just large enough to permit him to sleep inside. In the middle of the night he was aroused by a great noise made by a gathering of cats, which he could see by the faint light of the rising new moon were gamboling and evidently enjoying themselves. He fancied he could hear voices repeatedly saying, "Don't tell Shippei Taro : don't let him know,"—and then the cats would dance about with great glee. Being tired, and withal a little afraid, he did not dare to disturb their frolics. In the morning, feeling very hungry, he was anxious to find the nearest house, so followed the first path he met with, which, showing signs of recent footsteps, gave him hope ; but before he had gone far he heard cries of women, their voices sounding as if they were in great distress. Hurrying on, he came to a young girl crying bitterly, and seated on a bundle of firewood, which she had evidently been sent to gather. She told him that every year it was the custom to offer a sacrifice of a young maiden to the mountain god, that it had fallen to her lot for this year, and that in two days she would be the victim offered up. Further inquiry convinced him that this had something to do with what he had witnessed the night before. He accompanied her to the village, and, giving her the best encouragement he could to cheer her up, hurried on, and after satisfying his cravings with a hasty

meal made inquiries about "Shippei Taro." This he was told was the name of a fine hunting-dog belonging to the Prince, who had left it in the care of an agent while his master was away at court. So off our hero trudged, and, telling the agent his story and fears, borrowed the dog. Fortunately this agent was a learned man and had been one of the most active of the disciples of the tenets of Haji-no-Tsukune, who was renowned in history for having substituted clay figures for living sacrifices.

Now it was the custom to put the victim in a cage, so the student took the dog to the vicinity of the shrine, and, secretly communicating to the girl and her mother his intentions of attempting a rescue, watched his opportunity to substitute the dog for the girl. The following night the cats again assembled, and this time an enormous tom-cat, who seemed to be leader, appeared the most active. The student could hear voices, and to his astonishment heard the cats talking about and glorying in their anticipated feast, for it seems they would devour the poor girl as they had always done the former victims.

The student at last let loose Taro, who first siezed Master Tom-cat, and made short work of him and scores of the others. It turned out these were ghouls in the form of cats, so the student's enchanted sword was made to do good work in seconding Taro's brave work.

The student, imitating the great ancestor of the Emperor, Susa No, claimed the pretty maid as his wife, and the story becoming widely known, greatly contributed to the abolition of this hideous custom.

SUSA NO AND THE OROCHI.



WHEN Susa No was banished for his wild conduct, he wandered homeless through the mountains for a long time. One day while trying to find his way through the thick forests of the country of Idzumo, at a place called Hino Kawa Kami, he heard voices of women crying as if in great trouble. Making his way speedily in the direction of the voices, he soon came to an old man and woman and a young girl, and, inquiring the cause of their weeping and cries of distress, he was told that the deity of the mountain was propitiated by the yearly offering of a human sacrifice, a young maiden, and that it had fallen to the lot of their daughter to be the next victim; also that there was a monster known as "Eight-forked-great-serpent," an eight-headed reptile vomiting flame, that appeared at the shrine during the time of sacrifice every year.

Susa No offered to rescue the maiden, unknown to any one but themselves, if they would give her to him to be his wife. Of course he would have to convey her speedily away, but she must first go through the ordeal of being taken to the place of sacrifice by her parents. The maiden joyfully consented, and was glad to have such a noble looking man as her rescuer and future lord and master.

Susa No secretly procured eight large earthen jars and buried them opposite the shrine, so that they could not be seen during the ceremony. He also obtained a quantity of strong spirit, and hid it in the forest near at hand; then, when all the people had departed before the sun had set, leaving the maiden alone, for they feared the dreadful orochi, Susa No filled the jars with the spirit, and with drawn sword awaited the monster. He then released the maiden, but bade her remain in the shrine to attract the reptile, persuading her to have no fear, as he bore a charmed life.

When the orochi, believing every one to have gone, approached the shrine with horrible noise and dreadful flaming eyes and tongues, the maid was much frightened; but, as Susa No had anticipated, it scented

the spirit in the eight jars, and dipping a head into each, did not leave a drop in them. The strength of the spirit speedily took effect, so that the monster fell an easy prey to the brave Susa No. Now, as serpents are said to join readily again when cut, he hewed the orochi to pieces all but the tail. This resisted his efforts, so cutting it open he found therein the blade of a sword, now known as Mura Kumo Isurugi.

Susa No subsequently erected a shrine, and composed a poem, which may be rendered thus:—

Countless piling clouds
Idzumo's rocky heights envelop,
My spouse there have I placed,
A fence around her raised,
My strong arm protects her.

MOMOTARO.



ONCE upon a time there was an old couple who had no children, and, being poor, could not adopt any. They grieved over their lonely lot, and often prayed and paid visits to neighbouring shrines, that they might not be left deserted in their last days. They were kind, honest, and devout, and their neighbours agreed that they were worthy, deserving folk.

One day, after returning from a visit to a shrine, Granny was at the stream washing, when she saw floating along a fine ripe peach. Instead of at once greedily eating it, she put it carefully away to give to her old man. When she had given it to him, and he was about to divide it with a knife to give her half, it burst open and out dropped a little boy.

The old couple were delighted, and, believing the gods had sent them at last the long-hoped-for child, they planned a round of thanksgiving visits, to be made as soon as possible.

The boy was named Momotaro, and in course of time grew to be a fine lad, and the old man had him taught all the manly accomplishments, for poverty was not necessarily a hindrance to a willing and apt pupil.

When he had reached the age to think and act for himself, he was

constantly thinking how he could best reward the old people for their kindness to him, and he set out on a pilgrimage to certain shrines, believing the good spirit would aid him. He had a dream that decided him as to his course in search for wealth and fame. There was an island said to be inhabited by demons who guarded fabulous treasures of precious things, hid in the caves, and fastened up with great metal doors, guarded by dragons and ghouls ; and he dreamt he had been to this demons' isle, that he had overcome the demons, killed the guards, and forced the gates, and that the spirits in the form of animals had aided him in finding the treasure.

Momotaro now practised the use of heavy weapons until he became wonderfully expert. But the old folk were unwilling that he should incur such danger. He could be happy with them in their poverty : if they lost him they would be unable to replace him. But he persuaded them that the gods, who had sent him to them in a peach, would not desert them or him now.

So at last he started on his perilous adventure. His pet dog ran after him and asked to be taken : he would be good and not bark. The old folk had given Momotaro a lot of cakes to eat on the road, and he gave the dog some. By-and-by they met a monkey, who asked Taro where he was going, "and what have you got those great weapons for ?" "I am going to the Demons' Isle to kill the demons and take the treasure home to my old folks as some return for their kindness : here is some cake for you master monkey," said Taro. "Then I will go with you and help you," said the monkey. Taro thanked him, and gave him some cake. So the three went along together until they met a pheasant, who seemed to be a friend of the monkey. Taro gave him some cake, and when he heard where Taro was going he offered to join the party and help. So Taro was glad he gave him some cake, but wondered how his three friends were going to help him.

When they reached the shore there was only one boat, and it was a long way off. The monkey told the dog to swim out with him on his back. He thus managed to untie the boat and bring it back. The pheasant flew out and helped with his wings too, the dog swam with the rope in his mouth dragging the boat, while the monkey paddled.

When Taro got in, the pheasant flew to the island to spy out a place where they might land before the demons saw them, so that they would have time to hide the boat, for without it they would not be able to return with the treasure.

When they had landed and hidden the boat, Taro was guided by the pheasant to the cave, where he rapped, but got no answer. He then broke it open and found himself inside the palace of the demon-king. The pheasant flew over, the monkey climbed in, and the dog ran about the palace searching for the place where the treasure was, and when they had found it they came and told Taro. Then the monkey set fire to a place to attract the demons, the dog barked, and the pheasant made a great noise with his wings and tail on the roof, and thus Taro got the treasure away safely to the boat. When the demons found out their loss, they ran after Taro, but, while the dog bit them, the pheasant picked out their eyes, and the monkey jumped on them and scratched their faces. Taro beat them badly, so they begged for life, which he promised to spare if they would show him all the treasure. This they did, and he made them carry it to the boat, and then got away home as quick as he could with his three friends.

Taro and his friends were now happy, but the pheasant flew away to seek in the gardens of the princes the most beautiful lady in the land for Taro's wife. Taro's fame as a brave and rich man was great, so that he could choose where he liked, and thus he was able to fulfil the wishes of his kind old friends, who lived to see their great-grandchildren.

URA SHIMA TARO:

HIS VISIT TO THE HOME OF THE SEA-DRAGON.



TARO was the son of a poor fisherman and his wife, who were worthy, devout people, and taught their only boy to be pious, kind-hearted, and honest. They looked forward to a happy old age. One day when out fishing the boy caught a turtle, which immediately begged to be released. The fact

of its speaking to him assured him that it must contain the spirit of some human being, so he gave it freedom. The turtle then invited him to travel, and he, being assured his parents would not want in his absence, set out with his new friend. Finally they arrived at a beautiful palace built of coral and pearl, and his companion was suddenly transformed into a beautiful girl. He lived with her for a long time; but being anxious to see his good old parents again, he wished to visit them, and on departing on his journey was presented with a casket, which, so long as it remained unopened, gave him power to return at will, or to become possessed of anything he wished for. The casket also carried with it the gift of immortal youth. After a time, however, his curiosity overcame his prudence and he opened the casket, when it immediately melted away and disappeared, leaving him suddenly an old man.

[Another version of the story represents Taro retaining the casket unopened (it only bringing him unlimited wealth), and living happily, after providing for his parents, and that a grandson opened it.]

THE LOST FISH-HOOK.



HI-KO, the fourth son of Ni-ni-gi, was the first of hunters, and was ever successful. His elder brother Ho-no tried fishing, but in vain; he never caught anything, so he agreed to change places with his brother. The result was that Ho-no did not get anything for his efforts, and Hi-ko not only did not catch any fish, but lost the hook, a big fish having made off with it.

Now, as this was a very serious loss, Ho-no was very angry with his brother Hi-ko, besides he was jealous of him, and, even when Hi-ko made a great number of hooks, Ho-no refused them, unreasonably demanding the return of the lost one. Hi-ko was much grieved at his elder brother's harshness and unforgiving spirit and went to the sea-shore, at his wit's end what to do. While wandering along the beach he met an old man of very venerable appearance, who kindly inquired the cause of his grief. Hi-ko, glad to have some one to advise with in

his tribulation, told the old man about the loss of the hook and his brother's anger. The old man told Hi-ko that he was the "Venerable Ruler of the Tides," and that he could aid him. A wicker basket was speedily woven, as if by magic, and the old man directed Hi-ko to go afloat in it and search for his hook, rather than return and bear with his brother's unkindness.

Hi-ko gladly followed the advice, and, confident that the old man meant him well, set off without fear, for he was brave and honest. Before he had drifted far, he felt himself sinking rapidly down into the depths of the sea, and he could soon see spread before him a beautiful lake, on the banks of which grew an immense tree. Not far from the tree Hi-ko saw the entrance to a beautiful palace that turned out to be the Dragon Shrine or Sanctuary. Hi-ko, looking over the edge of his basket, saw a lovely maiden leave the shrine and approach the lake with a crystal vessel as if going to draw water, and in his eagerness and surprise he lost his balance and fell out, alighting in the branches of the tree. The noise startled the maiden, and, seeing the reflection of Hi-ko in the water beneath, she looked up, and saw the original in all his manly beauty just above her, gazing at her with admiration. The maiden, dropping her crystal water-holder, hastened back to the temple, and, meeting an old man at the entrance, pointed out to him Hi-ko in the branches of the tree. She said, "Surely this must be a son of the gods, he is so beautiful;" and, if it was one of these divine beings come from Japan, he should be treated with kindness and invited to their home.

This old man was Wada Zumi ("Wide-spread oceans"), and the beautiful maiden was his daughter, the Peerless Jewel lady.

Hi-ko was therefore invited by both to become their guest, and their friendly reception induced him to tell them of his misfortune, and of his meeting with the old man of the tides. The host promised to assist his guest, but did not mention that really he was aware of all this before, and that his friend of the tides had done him a good act to send in his direction so worthy a husband for his daughter.

The impatience and anxiety of Hi-ko, being allayed by hopes of finding the missing hook, were indeed soon forgotten in the companion-

ship of the Peerless Jewel maiden. In the meantime the fishes of the sea were ordered to assemble for examination, but no tidings came of the lost hook. The mutual love of the young couple caused the hook to be forgotten, and they were united, and for three years lived happily, Hi-ko having no desire to return. At length Hi-ko desired to revisit for a short time his own country, and wished another effort to be made to find the hook, so the fishes were once more ordered to assemble.

The red-fish sent excuses, pleading indisposition, but a lobster was heard to say, that, peering out of a crevice, he saw that the red-fish had a sore mouth, as if something extraordinary was the matter. This gave a clue, and true enough there was the long-sought-for hook in the truant's mouth. Peerless Jewel had not, as heretofore, when she feared to lose her handsome lover, discouraged the search : her happy state made her anxious to see the land of her husband's race, and he being of Imperial birth it was advisable she should go.

Hi-ko, happy in the recovery of the lost hook, and with a parting gift from Wada Zumi of two jewels, the possession of which gave him control over the flowing and receding tide, set out to prepare a fitting place to receive Peerless Jewel; and Wada Zumi told him it would be pleasing to the eight hundred million divine spirits, that he should build a roof of cormorant's wings, beneath which his child should first see the sun, for he would be the ancestor of the future emperors. Hi-ko then departed on a crocodile, and landed safe.

When he met his brother and returned the hook, his reception proved that the loss of the hook was not the real cause of anger, and, when his brother attacked him and would have slain him, he remembered the tide jewels, and touching them commanded the tide to rise. Touching the other jewel Hi-ko caused the water to recede again, and he set to work to build the roof of cormorant's wings. Before this was finished Peerless Jewel had landed, bringing with her a lady more beautiful than a jewel, her youngest sister. Peerless Jewel's time of travail had approached unexpectedly, and she enjoined Hi-ko not to approach her, for dire would be the consequences. He in his anxiety could not desist, but he was punished by seeing his beautiful Peerless Jewel transformed

into a crocodile that disappeared in the sea, leaving her child wrapped in sea-grass in the arms of her sister. The child was named U-ga-ya-fuki-awa-sedzu No Mikoto, "the royal child born beneath the unfinished canopy of cormorant's wings."

Henceforth the sea became inaccessible to man, and the jewels lost their virtue to control the tides, for the fault of Hi-ko.

U-ga-ya wedded the sister of Peerless Jewel, and lived 836,042 years. He was the first whose end was mortal, the first to die, and was interred (the first burial) at Wagashuayama in the province of Hinga.

TAMA MONO MAYE.

THE FOX WITH THE WHITE FACE AND NINE TAILS.



UNEHITO, the 74th of the Emperors (A.D. 1108 to 1123), now known by his posthumous title of Toba-no-In, became ill, but the doctors could not discover the cause or nature of the malady. At length Abe, the court astrologer, was consulted. He had heard some time previously that one night, when the Emperor was feasting, a sudden gust of wind had extinguished the lights, and, to the great amazement and terror of the company, the favourite mistress of the emperor, the lovely Tama Mono Maye, was noticed to emit a strange coloured luminous halo, which seemed to fill the air. This woman's origin was a mystery, but she seemed to have power to charm all who approached her. Abe suspected the emperor was bewitched by Tama, whom he considered to be no common mortal; and now he gave this as his opinion of the cause of the illness of the emperor. The favourite soon became aware that Abe had denounced her, and had him summoned to the royal presence, where she with great craftiness completely overbore him in argument. She obtained an imperial order for his disgrace and confinement within his own gates. Now Abe's wife had formerly been an inmate of the chief minister's household, and by her influence through this channel obtained a further hearing for her husband. Abe then erected an altar within the palace grounds, at which to pray for the


recovery of the sick emperor, and then tried to induce him to approach it, under the plea of honouring it with his presence. This request, as he foresaw, was not granted, so he then induced the courtiers of both sexes to follow his own example, and at last only the favourite remained. She had avoided to the last by many cunning artifices every attempt made by Abe to get her within the precincts of the shrine. But she was at last without any excuse ; even the emperor became suspicious, as the twenty-one days of fasting and prayer by Abe approached an ending : so she was compelled to go. The moment she stepped upon the matting at the foot of the shrine she was transformed into a white-visaged nine-tailed fox, and then vanished. The Emperor recovered and lived for some years after.

Two brave warriors and skilful archers were ordered by the Emperor to seek the fox and destroy it. The search was tedious, but at last it was found in the wild plain of Nasu, in the province of Shinotsuke. Surrounding the place with men so that it could not escape, they unearthed and shot it. Immediately a large rock appeared on the spot, and such was its power of destruction, that no beast or bird ever approached it and survived ; no mortal, even, was safe. At length a fence had to be erected round it, to keep the unwary or ignorant from harm.


About fifty years after, a priest of a religious sect, then but lately founded as an offshoot of some older Buddhist sects, devoted himself to subduing the demon, and, taking with him a large hammer, approached the dreaded rock, reciting prayers, and then struck it violently, keeping time to his chanting and breaking large pieces off. At length the figure of the beautiful Tama Mono Maye appeared, and she reproached him for hurting her ; but the priest was well prepared to resist her spells ; so he continued to pray that the soul thus confined within the demon might be purified and released, and become a spirit absorbed into eternity.

His prayers seem to have succeeded, as the rock has ever since been harmless.

THE LOVING WIFE.

URING the days of the Emperor Sen-ka Ten O (about A.D. 536 to 539) there was war between Japan and Corea. An expedition was sent to the provinces where fighting was going on, and with it went Sate Hiko, son of Otonomo Kanemura. The ships set out from Hizen, and the friends of the warriors ascended the hills to see them as far on their voyage as possible. Sayo Hime, the wife of Sate Hiko, climbed higher than the rest, and when on the summit of Matzoura hill stood and prayed for her dear lord's safe and speedy return. Such was the intensity of her prayers and thoughts that she became petrified into a stony figure, and thus remains an enduring monument of what a true wife should be in her husband's absence—cold to all. Thus it is that the name of Sayo Hime is a household word in Japan for a faithful wife and devoted affection.

THE SPARROW'S WEDDING.

N the days of old, there lived in the forest at the back of an old shrine, not far from the pathway, a sparrow called Chiyo-suke. He had been for a long time looking about for a suitable wife for his eldest boy Chiyo-taro, being anxious that he should settle down and become more steady and industrious. As usual, he had formerly arranged with a neighbour a match between his daughter and Chiyo-taro, but the girl had died, and the boy was now, as his father thought, free. Such was not the case, however, because one day, when Chiyo-taro went to visit the shrine of his tutelary saint, he met the daughter of Suzu-yemon, and was so much charmed by her pretty face and modest ways that he fell in love with her directly, and, boy-like, suddenly decided that he would have her or none for his future wife. When he went home he took the first opportunity to confide his wish to his mother, and, as she had heard the story of Suzu-yemon, all about his being caught and his tongue cut by the cruel old woman, and also how kind and dutiful his daughter Osuzu always was to her friends,

she promised to help him. Chiyo-suke was sorry his son had not made a grander match, but, as there was nothing to be said against the character of Osuzu and her family, he, with a little coaxing, consented.

The next thing to be done was to find some elderly woman, who was intimate with both families and a good match-maker, to act as a go-between in such cases, and who was smart and clever in finding out everybody's business. Now there is rarely much trouble in finding out such a one, for, if they manage well, they are sure to receive nice presents from all parties, and they generally try hard to earn them. Dressing herself in her best clothes, and asking that one of Chiyo-suke's maidservants might attend upon her to make a little more show, the match-maker paid a visit to Osuzu's family. The good folk guessed the object of the visit to be an offer of marriage for their daughter, but as in duty bound, according to olden custom, they cleverly avoided appearing to know it, and evaded every attempt to bring round the chat to that subject. After many pipes of tobacco had been whiffed, and tiny cups of tea sipped, they at length admitted that Osuzu was not as yet betrothed, but they were in no hurry, there was plenty of time, and her pretty face and cleverness would get her a rich husband by-and-by. The match-maker hinted that Chyo-suke's son would be a very good match. He was rich, handsome, and clever, not any worse than other young men, and so forth. She pressed her point, and finally obtained the consent of Osuzu's friends to return to Chiyo-suke and arrange for a formal meeting of the two families.

Elated with her success, she commenced in earnest, and the result was that in a few days the middlemen or witnesses were appointed. The bridal gifts were chosen by the bridegroom, amongst other things a beautiful girdle, a bundle of white fibre, fish, wine, &c.

In return the bride's family sent him a complete dress of ceremony, wine, &c., and on the day of the wedding her bridal outfit would be sent to her future home.

A lucky day was now chosen for Osuzu to leave her old home, to go to her future one. Chiyo-taro's friends and neighbours met at his house on the evening of the happy day with their paper lanterns, which they lighted to go to meet the bride and her friends.

When the chair in which Osuzu was carried arrived at her new

home, she was lifted out of it and carried into the house with a great fuss, for it is not lucky to allow the bride to walk in for the first time lest she should touch with her feet certain places, and that would be a bad omen. She was first taken to the Buddha shelf, the family shrine, and to the Shelf of the Gods and other places, to kneel before them and pray to be admitted into the family, and for prosperity to her new home—she still wearing her beautiful new silk dresses and the veil of floss silk over her head. Then she was led to the best room, where a grand feast was spread out, and seated beside Chiyo-taro. They drank wine from the same cup, whilst the friends clapped their hands and congratulated them. She was then led to a side room, and her robes were changed for a beautiful bright-coloured crêpe dress and a gold brocade girdle. During the feast her robes were changed several times, to exhibit to admiring friends the extent of her wardrobe, and by the time daylight was dawning every one had feasted so heartily that they were nearly all asleep.

This was said to be the grandest wedding known in the forest for many long years. Chiyo-taro was a good, kind, husband, and he and Osuzu were happy and prospered, living to a good old age.

A GUILTY CONSCIENCE.



LONG ago there was a lazy man whom the little children of the village always teased and played pranks upon when they could. One very warm day they found him asleep in the shade, so they twisted up some paper and put the end in his nose ; they watched until he awoke, taking care, however, to be at a safe distance.

The tickling of the paper in his nose woke him, and putting his hand up to his face he felt the paper, and started in a great fright shouting out, "Oh ! Oh, have I been changed to an ox, tied by the nose, to be a beast of burden ; is this a punishment for my sins ?" Though the children laughed, and so did the old people when they heard of it, the lazy man never forgot it, and he was persuaded by the priests of the village temple that it was a warning to him from the great Buddha.

THE MAID WHOSE FACE WAS HIDDEN UNDER A BOWL.



IN olden time there lived in an out-of-the-way place, in the province of Yamato, an old couple who had a very pretty daughter, an only child. Her father died while she was yet a little girl, leaving her and her mother in great want.

They were of noble birth, but civil war had driven the father to hide himself in this place, and pride had prevented him making any effort to regain a position by humbling himself to his successful enemies. When the little maid was thirteen years old her mother fell sick.

The poor woman, fearing she would never recover, was in great distress before her death; the thought of leaving her lovely child alone in the world, without friends or protector, troubled her. She sent the maid for a large wooden bowl, and, when she brought it, directed her to put it on her head upside down so as to hide her face, and told her that when she became an orphan it was on no account whatever to be taken off until she was married of her own free will to the man of her choice. The mother died the same night, and the maid found the bowl could not be moved, and thus it remained for years. Her beauty became more marked every year and attracted much attention, but she firmly repelled all advances made her. Her hereditary pride, however, sustained her in her efforts to earn an honest, though a scanty and precarious, living, and she refused all proffers that appeared to be dictated by charity or evil intent.

Now there was in this village, as in all others, a "great man," and he was both rich and clever. Having formerly been an officer at court, he had sent his son to replace him, and take advantage of the opportunity to study. The lady of the house was in delicate health, so he, hearing of the "beautiful maiden with the wooden bowl," took her under his protection, and she became the lady's waiting-maid. In time the son returned satiated with the follies and pleasures of the gay capital, and he was not slow to notice the beauty and modesty of his step-mother's handmaiden; indeed before long he made fierce love to her, which she haughtily repelled, and her resentment only made

him the more eager to possess her. His family tried to dissuade him, and the unjust and unkind remarks he was forced to hear only the more determined him to obtain her as his wife.

Her fair features, elegant bearing, well-chosen language, and her few accomplishments, made her an object of envy to the country lasses, but her lover's city experiences had taught him to know her true worth. Even when he had gained the unwilling consent of his friends, he had yet to obtain the maid's own free consent; but one night, having dreamed her mother had visited her and advised her to consent, she finally allowed a lucky day to be chosen.

Great was the stir made in preparing for the wedding ceremonies and feastings. Many were the remarks made, but the faithful and love-smitten swain heeded not the banter of his acquaintances of both sexes, and, as a diversion, set himself to work laying out the garden, and fitting up the apartments set apart for him by his father for himself and his bride.

Before the wedding, frequent efforts were made to remove the bowl, and the well-meaning, but too officious, friends only desisted when they found their efforts fruitless, and that they caused the maiden much pain. However, in the evening, when the final hymeneal wine cup had passed between them, the wooden bowl suddenly split asunder, and, disappearing with a great clash and rattle, left a shower of all kinds of precious and beautiful presents on the train of the bride's robes. She told her spouse about her mother appearing to her in her dream, and promising that, if they were true and faithful to each other, happiness and prosperity would be their lot through life. Let us believe it was so with the faithful swain and his pretty maid with the wooden bowl.

C. PFOUNDÉS.

A FOLK-TALE OF THE HIDATSA INDIANS.

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NEAR the mouth of Burnt Creek, on the east bank of the Missouri, are the vestiges of some large round lodges, which stood there before the Indians came into the land. They were inhabited by several mysterious beings of great power in sorcery. In one of the lodges lived the two great demi-gods Long Tail and Spotted Body; a woman lived with them, who took care of their lodge and who was their wife and sister: and these three were at first the only beings of their kind in the world. In a neighbouring lodge lived an evil monster named Big Mouth, “who had a great mouth and no head.” He hated the members of Long Tail’s lodge, and when he discovered that the woman was about to become a mother, he determined to attempt the destruction of her offspring.

When Long Tail and Spotted Body were absent on a hunt one day, Big Mouth entered their lodge, and, addressing the woman, said he was hungry. The woman was greatly frightened, but did not wish to deny him her hospitality; so she proceeded to broil him some meat on the coals. When the meat was cooked, she offered it to him on a wooden dish. He told her that, from the way his mouth was made, he could not eat out of a dish, and the only way she could serve him the food so that he could eat it, was by lying down and placing it on her side. She did as he intimated, when he immediately devoured the

meat, and in doing so tore her in pieces. She died, or seemed to die; but the children thus rudely brought into the world were immortal. One of these he seized, and throwing him into the bottom of the lodge said, "Stay there for ever among the rubbish, and let your name be Atùtish. The other he took out and threw into a neighbouring spring, saying to him, "Your name is Mahash; stay there for ever, where you will love the mud and learn to eat nothing but the worms and reptiles of the spring."

When Long Tail and Spotted Body came home, they were horrified to find their sister slaughtered; they mourned her duly, and then placed her body on a scaffold, as these Indians do. After the funeral they returned hungry to the lodge, and put some meat on the fire to cook. As the pleasant odour of the cooking arose, they heard an infantile voice crying and calling for food. They sought and listened, and sought again, until at length they found Atùtish, whom they dragged forth into the light, and knew to be the child which they supposed was devoured or lost for ever. Long Tail then placed Atùtish on the ground, and, holding his hand some distance above the child's head, made a wish "that he would grow so high," and instantly the child attained the stature, mind, and knowledge of a boy about eight years old. Then Long Tail made many inquiries concerning what had happened to him and the whereabouts of his brother; but the child could give no information of what took place during the visit of Big Mouth.

In a day or two after this transaction, the elders made for the child a little stick and wheel (such as Indian children use in the game called by the Canadians of the Upper Missouri, roulette), and bade him play round in the neighbourhood of the lodge, while they went out to hunt again. While he was playing near the spring, he heard a voice calling to him and saying "miakas" (my elder brother). He looked in the direction from which the voice proceeded, and saw little Mahash looking out of the spring. Wanting a playmate, Atùtish invited him to come out and play. So Mahash came out, and the two brothers began to amuse themselves. But when Long Tail and his brother approached the lodge, on their return from the hunt, Mahash smelled

them far off, rushed away like a frightened beast, and hid himself in the spring. When the elders returned, Atùtish told them all that happened while they were gone. They concluded that he of the spring must be their lost child, and devised a plan to rescue him, which they communicated to Atùtish.

Next morning they made another and smaller roulette-stick, for the enchanted child to play with. Then they divested themselves of their odour as much as possible, and hid themselves near the spring and to the leeward of it. When all was ready, Atùtish went to the edge of the spring and cried aloud, "Mahash! do you want to come out?" Soon the latter lifted his head cautiously out of the spring, raised his upper lip, showing his long white fangs, snuffed the air keenly, looked wildly around him, and drew back again into the water. Atùtish then went near where he had seen his brother rise and called again to him, but the child answered from the water that he feared to come out, as he thought he smelt the hunters. "Have no fear," said Atùtish; "the old men are gone out hunting and will not be back till night. I am here alone. Come out to the warm sunlight. We will have a good time playing, and I will give you something nice to eat." Thus coaxed and reassured, the other ventured out, still looking mistrustfully around him. Atùtish then gave him a piece of boiled buffalo tongue to eat, which the little boy said was the best thing he had ever tasted. "Very well," said Atùtish, "let us play, and I will stake the rest of this tongue against some of your frogs and slugs on the game." Mahash agreed, and soon in the excitement of the play he forgot his fears. They played along with the roulette some time without much advantage on either side, until at length they threw their sticks so evenly that it was impossible to tell which was the furthest from the wheel. They disputed warmly, until Atùtish said, "Stoop down and look close and you will see that I have made the best throw." The other stooped over to observe; and, while his attention was thus engaged, his brother came behind the little fellow, seized him, and held him fast. Atùtish then called to the concealed hunters, who ran up, threw a lariat around the struggling captive, and bound him firmly. Having secured the wild boy, their next task was

to break the spell by which his tastes and habits were made so unnatural. To accomplish this, Long Tail and Spotted Body put him in the sweat-house, and there steamed him until he was almost exhausted. They then took him out and began to whip him severely. As they plied the lash they made wishes, that the keen scent would leave his nose, that the taste for reptiles would leave his mouth, that the fear of his own kind would leave his heart, &c. As they progressed with this performance, he suddenly cried out to Atùtish, "Brother, I remember myself now; I know who I am." When he said this he was released; and his first impulse was to run to the spring. He ran there; but when he reached the edge he stopped, for he found he no longer loved the black mud and the slimy water, and he returned to the lodge.

Long Tail then placed the twins side by side, and holding his extended hand, palm downwards, above their heads, a little further from the ground than on the previous occasion, wished that they would both be "so high;" when at once they grew to the size of boys about fourteen years old, and they grew in wisdom correspondingly. Then Long Tail made bows and hunting-arrows for the boys, and a pair of medicine-arrows for their protection and for use on extraordinary occasions, and he addressed them saying, "You are now big enough to protect yourselves. Go out on the prairie and hunt, and we will see which one of you will be the best hunter." After that they went out every day and became expert hunters.

Once, as they were looking for game among the hills, they came to a scaffold on which a corpse was laid. "There," said Atùtish, "is the body of our mother. She was murdered, no one knows how." "Let us try the strength of our medicine arrows upon her," said Mahash, "perhaps we could bring her back to life." So saying he stepped close to the scaffold and shot straight up. As the arrow turned to fall, he cried out, "Take care, mother, or you will get hurt," and, as it descended near the body, the scaffold shook and a low groan was heard. Then Atùtish stepped nearly under the scaffold and shot up in the air. As his arrow turned to fall he cried out, "Mother! Mother! Jump quick or the arrow will strike you." At once she arose, jumped down from the scaffold, and, recognising her children,

embraced them. The boys then asked her who was the author of their calamities, and how it all happened. She pointed to the lodge of Big Mouth, and related all the circumstances of her death. Upon hearing this, the boys swore they would be revenged. Their mother endeavoured to dissuade them, describing Big Mouth to them, assuring them that his medicine was potent, and that he certainly would destroy them if they went near him. They paid no attention to her remonstrances, but proceeded to plot the destruction of the monster.

Now this Big Mouth had a very easy way of making a living. He neither trapped nor hunted, nor took pains to cook his food. He simply lay on his back, and when a herd of deer came within sight of his lodge, or a flock of birds flew overhead, no matter how far distant, he turned towards them, opened his great mouth, and drew in a big breath, when instantly they fell into his mouth and were swallowed. In a little while the boys had their plans arranged. They built a large fire, and heated some small boulders in it. Then they carried the stones to the top of his lodge, put them near the smoke-hole, and began to imitate a flock of blackbirds. "Go away, little birds," said Big Mouth, "you are not fit to eat, and I am not hungry; but go away and let me sleep, or I will swallow you." "We are not afraid of you," said the boys; and they began to chirp again. At length Big Mouth got angry. He turned up his mouth, opened it wide, and, just as he began to draw his breath to suck them in, the boys stepped aside, and hurled the stones down into the lodge. "Oh, what sharp claws those birds have! They are tearing my throat!" exclaimed the monster, as he swallowed the red-hot rocks. The next moment he roared with pain and rushed for his water-jars, drinking immense draughts; but the steam made by the water on the rocks swelled him up, and the more he drank the worse he swelled, until he burst and died.

The boys brought the body home, and, after they had danced sufficiently around it, their mother praised them for what they had done; but she said, "You must not be too venturesome. All these lodges around are inhabited by beings whose power in sorcery is great. You cannot always do as well as you have done this time. You

should keep away from the rest of them. There is an old woman in particular whom you must avoid. She is as powerful as Big Mouth ; but you cannot kill her in the same way as you killed him, for she catches her food, not in her mouth, but in a basket. Whenever she sees anything that she wants to eat she turns her basket towards it, and it drops in dead. If she sees a flock of wild geese among the clouds, no matter how high they fly, she can bring them down." When the boys heard this, they said nothing in reply to their mother, but set off secretly to compass the death of the witch. They went to the lodge of the latter, and standing near the door, cried, "Grandmother, we have come to see you." "Go away, children, and don't annoy me," she replied. "Grandmother, you are very nice and good, and we like you. Won't you let us in?" continued the boys. "Oh, no," said she, "I don't want to hurt you ; but begone, or I will kill you." Despite this threat, they remained, and again spoke to her, saying, "Grandmother, we have heard that you are very strong medicine, and that you have a wonderful basket that can kill anything. We can scarcely believe this. Won't you lend us the basket a little while until we see if we can catch some birds with it?" She refused the basket at first, but, after much coaxing and flattering, she handed it to them. No sooner were they in possession of the basket, than they turned it upon the witch herself, and she dropped into it dead.

After this exploit the mother again praised the boys, but again warned them to beware of the evil genii of the place which she described. One of these was a man with a pair of wonderful mocassins, with which he had only to walk round anything he wanted to kill. Another was a man with a magic knife, with which he could either cut or kill anything that he threw the knife at. These individuals they destroyed in the same manner that they overcame the basket-woman, by coaxing them to lend their magic property, and then slaying the owners with their own weapons. On each occasion the boys retained the charmed articles for their future use.

When all this was done, the old mother called her boys and told them there was but one more dangerous being that they had to guard themselves against. She said, "He lives in the sky where you cannot

get at him ; but he can hurt you, for his arm is so long that it reaches from the heavens to the earth. His name is Long Arm." "Very well," said the boys, "we will beware of him." One morning, soon after receiving this advice, they went out very early to hunt, but could find nothing to kill. They walked and ran many miles, until late in the day, when they became very tired and lay down to sleep on the prairie. As was their custom, they stuck their medicine arrows in the ground, close beside them. The arrows possessed such a charm, that if any danger threatened the boys, they would fall to waken them. While the brothers lay asleep, Long Arm looked down from the clouds, and, beholding them, stretched his great arm down towards them. As the arm descended, the arrows fell hard upon the boys ; but the latter were so tired and sleepy that they did not waken, and Long Arm grasped Atùtish and bore him to the sky. In a little while Mahash woke up and discovered, to his horror, that the warning arrows had fallen, and that his brother was gone. He looked round carefully on the prairie for the departing tracks of his brother, or for the tracks of the man or the beast that had captured him, but in vain. When at his wits' end, and almost in despair, he chanced to glance towards the sky, and there, on the face of a high white summer cloud, he saw the doubled track of Long Arm, where he came near the earth and went back. Mahash laid down his bow and arrow and other accoutrements, retaining only his medicine knife, which he concealed in his shirt. He next stuck his magic arrows into the ground and got on top of them, and then he crouched low, strained every muscle, and sprang upwards with all his might. He jumped high enough to catch hold of the ragged edge of the cloud. From that time he scrambled higher, until he at last got on Long Arm's trail, which he followed. For fear of recognition he wished himself smaller, and, becoming a little toddling child, moved on till he came to a great crowd, moving in one direction, with much talk and excitement. He ran up to an old woman who walked a little apart, and asked her what was the matter. She informed him that they had just captured one of the children of the new race which was growing on the earth—a boy who had destroyed many favoured genii, and that they were about to kill and

burn him. "Grandmother," said Mahash, "I would like to see this, but I am too little to walk there. Will you carry me?" She took him on her back and brought him to the place where the crowd had gathered. There he saw his brother tied to a stake, and a number of people dancing round him. He thought if he could only reach the post unobserved, and touch the cords with his medicine-knife, he could release his brother; but for some time he was puzzled how to do it. At length he slid down from the old woman's back, and wished that for a little time he might turn to an ant. He became one, and, as such, crawled through the feet of the crowd and up to the post, where he cut the cords that bound Atùtish. When the latter was free, Mahash resumed his proper shape, and they both ran as hard as they could for the edge of the clouds. The crowd pursued them; but, as each foremost runner approached, Mahash threw his knife and disabled him. At last Long Arm started after the brothers, running very fast. As he came within his arm's length of them, he reached out to grasp one of them. As he did so, Mahash again threw his knife, and severed the great arm from the shoulder. The boys got back safely to the earth. They, having ridded themselves of all their enemies, lived in peace, and in time they moved away from that locality.—"*Ethnography and Philology of the Hidatsa Indians*," pp. 63-70.

VARIOUS SUPERSTITIONS OF THE HIDATSA INDIANS.



THEY have a great many superstitious notions, yet I believe their superstitions are neither more numerous, nor more absurd, than those of the peasantry of some European nations of to-day. There is, too, among them every degree of faith in these fancies, from almost perfect scepticism to the most humble credulity. I will not describe all of their superstitions known to me, but will refer, for illustration, to a few of them. They believe in the existence and visibility of human and other ghosts, yet

they seem to have no terror of graveyards, and but little of mortuary remains. Yeu may frighten children after nightfall by shouting nohidahi (ghost), but will not scare the aged. They have much faith in dreams, but usually regard as oracular those only which come after prayer, sacrifice, and fasting. They have queer notions respecting the effects of different articles of diet, thus: An expectant mother believes that if she eats part of a mole or shrew, her child will have small eyes; that if she eats a piece of porcupine, her child will be inclined to eat too much when it grows up; that if she partakes of the flesh of the turtle, her offspring will be slow or lazy, &c.; but they do not suppose such articles of food affect the immediate consumer. They have faith in witchcraft, and think that a sorcerer may injure any person, no matter how far distant, by acts upon an effigy or upon a lock of the victim's hair.

It is believed by some of the Hidatsa, that every human being has four souls in one. They account for the phenomena of gradual death, where the extremities are apparently dead while consciousness remains, by supposing the four souls to depart one after another at different times. When dissolution is complete, they say that all the souls are gone, and have joined together again outside of the body. I have heard a Minnetaree quietly discussing this doctrine with an Assinneboine, who believed in only one soul to each body.

Every man in this tribe, as in all other neighbouring tribes, has his personal medicine, which is usually some animal. On all war parties, and often on hunts and other excursions, he carries the head, claws, stuffed skin, or other representative of his medicine with him, and seems to regard it in much the same light that Europeans in former days regarded, and in some cases still regard, protective charms. To insure the future fleetness of some promising young colt, they tie to the colt's neck a small piece of deer or antelope horn. The rodent teeth of the beaver are regarded as potent charms, and are worn by little girls on their necks to make them industrious.—“*Ethnography and Philology of the Hidatsa Indians*,” pp. 49, 50.

CHAUCER'S NIGHT-SPELL.



TYRWHITT'S *Canterbury Tales* enjoyed for half a century the reputation of being the best edited poem in the English language. But it had one failing: it was Tyrwhitt's text, and not the text of any one M.S. In 1847 the late Mr. Thomas Wright edited the *Canterbury Tales* for the Percy Society from the Harleian M.S. No. 7334, which he pronounced the "best and oldest MS." he had met with. That edition was a great boon to Chaucer students; albeit it bore occasional evidence that the editor, whose powers of work (great as they were) were always overtaxed, had not been able to bestow upon it the time and consideration necessary to do justice to his author or to his own powers of illustrating the language and allusions of Chaucer.

This is strikingly illustrated by the note which he makes on the curious Night Charm, which in *The Miller's Tale* Chaucer has put into the mouth of the carpenter:

"Lord Jhesu Crist, and seynte Benedyht
Blesse this hous from every wikked wight,
Fro nyghtes verray, the white Paternostre
When wonestow now, seynte Petres soster."

This is Mr. Wright's version of the text. I now quote his note on *Verray*. "This is the reading of the MSS. I have consulted. Tyrwhitt reads *mare*, which is perhaps right."

Seeing that *Verray* was the reading of the MS. which he had selected as the "best and oldest," and of the other MSS. which he had consulted, I certainly was surprised to find Mr. Wright coming to the conclusion that Tyrwhitt's reading "*mare*" is perhaps right.

In spite of my respect for Mr. Wright's judgment on any matter connected with our early language and literature, I took a different

view of this reading, and thought, perhaps, the MS. was right ; and, at all events, the question was worth investigating. .

Disappointed at finding that Brathwaite, in his *Comment on The Miller's Tale* (p. 31), had omitted the words of the charm, I made up my mind to collect the readings of it from as many MSS. as I could get access to ; a resolution which I fear must have procured for me the character of a great bore, not only from some of my friends, but also from possessors of Chaucer MSS. to whom I was not known. Among the latter my thanks were especially due to the late Lord Ashburnham, to whose kindness and courtesy I was indebted for transcripts of "The Charm" from all his MSS. ; while among the former I must gratefully remember the late Rev. John Wilson, of Trinity College, Oxford, who sent me similar transcripts from all the MSS. in the Bodleian, from one in his own college, and one at Corpus. I myself copied it from all the MSS. in the British Museum. For, while I was most anxious to clear up the meaning of the hitherto unnoticed "verray," I was also desirous to learn what I could about "the white Paternoster" and "St. Peter's Soster," indulging, like Mr. Micawber, in the hope "that something would turn up" which would furnish materials for a pleasant paper for the Society of Antiquaries.

When, on the formation of the Folk-Lore Society, I was invited to contribute to its publications, I remembered my old curiosity about Chaucer's Night Charm, and determined to look up my notes on the subject. But, alas ! in the thirty years of a life (not altogether an idle one) which have passed since those notes were made, I regret to say, many of them have disappeared, and, of the numerous transcripts of the passage to which I have referred, I have only been able to recover the eight from the Oxford MSS., and two of those I copied from the British Museum ; and some few references to passages in English and foreign books of folk-lore, more or less illustrative of the three allusions in the Charm, which appear to me at least very obscure, viz., "Nighthes verray," "St. Peter's Soster," and "White Paternoster;" and I should now have hesitated to submit so fragmentary a paper to the Members of the Folk-Lore Society but for

my belief that one of the main objects of that Society should be the gathering up of the remains of the Old-World Beliefs for the use of the English Grimm, whose genius and good fortune it may be to evolve from them *the Mythology of England*.

The following are the ten versions of the Night Spell as it appears in the MSS. to which I have referred. I omit, except in the first instance, the four introductory lines, as their repetition would occupy much space without any advantage, as they do not contain a word which tends to throw light upon the point at issue; and here let me plead, in justification of my preference for the old *Mumpsimus* "verray" over the new *Sumpsimus* "mare," not only that it occurs (varying only in orthography) in eight out of the ten MSS., but also that two or three years ago an accomplished friend with whom I had once talked over the Spell sent me the following readings of the line in which the word "verray" occurs, from the Six Texts Edition of The Canterbury Tales, published by the Chaucer Society, and that it is "verye," not "mare," in every instance:

I. For nyghtes verye the white paternoster.

Ellesmere MS.

II. For the nyghtes uerye, &c.

Hengwrt MS.

III. For the nyghte's verye, &c.

Cambridge MS.

IV. and V. For the nyghtes uerye, &c.

Corpus and Petworth MSS.

VI. For the nyghte verye, &c.

Lansdowne MS.

I.

I crouche ye from elves and from wightes
 þ'e with ye might spel a none rightes
 on *fotur* halves of ye house abought
 and on the threswold of ye dore with oute
 J'hu crist and saint Benedicte
 Blisse yis house from everie wicked wight
 ffor þe nighte mar þe with a pater n'r
 Wher wendest þou seint petri's sustur.

MS. Bodl. Hatton D.I.

II.

Now J'hu crist and seynt benedyght
 blisse this hous from ev'y wikkede wight
 for the nyghtes very the white pater noster
 where wentestow seynt Pet'is suster.

MS. Bodl. Arch. Selden, B. 14.

III.

J'hu crist and seint benedight
 Blisse this hous from every wikked wight
 ffor the nyghtes verie the white pater noster
 where wentestow thou seynt petir suster.

MS. Bodl. Land. 739.

IV.

J'hu christ and seynt beneditht
 Blesse þis house from every wikked wight
 ffo þe nyghtes verie þe white pat'n'r
 Where wendestow þou seint petrus suster.

MS. Bodl. 686.

V.

J'hu crist and seint benedight
 Blesse þis hous from ev'y wikked wight
 ffo þe nightes verie the white pater noster
 Where wentestow thou seint petir suster.

MS. Bodl. Lond. 600.

VI.

J'hu crist and seint Benedight
 Blisse this hous from every wicked wight
 ffor the night mare the white pater nost'
 Wher wentestow seint petir suster.

MS. Bodl. 414, fo. 83.

VII.

J'hu crist and seynt Benedight
 Blesse this hous from every wikkede wight
 For the nightes verye the white pate noster
 Where wentestow thou seinte Peteris suster.

MS. Corpus Christi Coll. Oxon. fo. 48, sect. xv.

VIII.

J'hu criste and seinte beneditight
 Bille this house from ev'y wikkid wight
 fro nyghtis veere the white pat' nost'
 wher kneledestow thou seint peteres sist'.

MS. Trin. Coll. Oxon. No. 49.

IX.

Jh'u crist and seint Benedight
 Bliss this hous from every wikkede wyght
 ffor the nyghtes verye the white paternoster
 Where wentestow þow seynt peters suster.

Royal MS. 18, C. ii.

X,

J'hu Criste and saynte Benedicte
 Blysse the howse frome everye wykede wyghte
 ffor the nyghtes werre the *with* pater n'r
 Where whentestow you saynte peters suster.

Paper—Royal MS. 17 C. 14.

I had hoped to submit a few of the notes I had formerly made on the words "Verray," "Vere," and some analogous names; but it is a curious incident in connection with my advocacy of the reading "Veray," that, with the exception of a few brief references, such as "warra" in Haupt's *Alt Deutsche Blätter*, i. 371, to the word "Werre" in Wackernagel's *Worterbuch*, and the word "Vare" in Hoffman's *Reineke Vos*, the only memorandum of any length which I have recovered is in connection with a locality of which I never heard before, except from a cousin, who, when travelling on the Continent some forty years since, found himself in Thomsdorf.

In Kuhn and Schwartz's *Nord-deutsche Sagen, Märchen, und Gebräuche*, s. 66, they give a curious legend from Thomsdorf of Die Alte Fricke—the Devil's Grandmother; and in a note upon that legend (s. 508) the learned editors tell us that a similar legend is preserved in Haupt and Schmalers' *Volkslieder der Wenden*, ii. 172, where the old witch or sorceress is called "Wera," a name clearly analogous to "Werra," a Slavonic deity, nearly connected with Frau Holle. He then refers to Grimm's *Mythologie*, where (2nd ed. p. 251) we are told in a note upon the infuriated *Berchta* "that in Voightland, on the eve of the new year, the *Werre* makes a careful search to see whether all the flax has been spun, and, if it has not, spoils whatever is left; and if on that evening the *polse* (a sort of thick broad cakes of flour and water) have not been got ready, tears open the body of

those who have neglected to make them." *Werre* is more merciful than *Berchta*, who, if her expected feast has not been prepared for her, after tearing open the bodies of those who have so offended her, sews them up again, with a ploughshare instead of a needle, and iron chains instead of thread.

From the interest which I took in this subject, it was only natural that when *Notes and Queries* was established I should seek to gain through its columns some illustration of it. Accordingly, in February, 1850, I inserted (1st S. i. p. 229) an inquiry as to the three interesting points in this remarkable night-spell. This was almost immediately answered, as to two of them, by my kind and accomplished friend the late Canon Rock (*ibid.* p. 281), with the ingenious suggestion that the "White Paternoster" may possibly be the "Witch's Paternoster," and he quoted in support of this suggestion a paragraph from Henry Parker's *Compendiouse Treatyse or Dialogue of Dives and Pauper*, 1536, from which I will quote only one short passage, which seemed to bear very strongly in favour of Dr. Rock's hypothesis.

"It hath oft been knowen that wytyches with sayenge of their Paternoster and droppynge of the holy candell in a man's steppes that they hated, hath done his fete rotten off;" and he went on to suggest that St. Peter's soster should rather have been St. Peter's daughter, St. Petronilla, the St. Pernell of *The Golden Legend*, who, as he tells us, "came to be looked upon in this country as the symbol of bad health under all its forms. Now, if we suppose that the poet mistook and wrote 'soster' instead of 'doughter,' we immediately understand the drift of the latter part of the spell, which was, not only to drive away witchcraft, but guard all the folks in that house from sickness of every kind."

I am bound, in candour, to add that the learned Canon in a subsequent communication dissented from my view of "veray," and for reasons which will be seen in *Notes and Queries* (4th S. iii. p. 438) states, "to my mind therefore 'nightes verray' is only and simply another word for our present term 'night-mare.'"

But the information which my divers inquiries had failed to elicit was a year or two afterwards incidentally brought forward in answer

to an inquiry (1st S. xi. p. 206) as to the age and author of the old nursery hymn,

Gentle Jesus, meek and mild,
Look upon a little child,
Pity my simplicity,
And suffer me to come to Thee.

to which at page 313 Mr. W. J. Bernhard Smith wrote as follows :—

“ The nursery hymn is probably in part derived from the *Paternostre blanche*, pour aller infalliblement en Paradis,” to be found in the *Enchiridion Papæ Leonis, Romæ*, MDCLX., which, absurd and almost profane as it is, I quote for his information, as the work which contains it is by no means common—

“ Petite Patenôtre blanche que Dieu fit, que Dieu dit, que Dieu mit en Paradis. Au soir m'allant coucher, je trouvis trois anges à mon lit couchés, un aux pieds, deux au chevet, la bonne Vierge Marie au milieu, qui me dit que je me couchis, que rien ne doutis.

“ Le bon Dieu est mon Pere, la bonne Vierge ma Mere, les trois apôtres sont mes Freres, les trois Vierges sont mes Sœurs. La chemise où Dieu fut né, mon corps en est enveloppé ; la croix Sainte Marguerite à ma poitrine est écrite ; Madame s'en va sur les champs à Dieu pleurant, rencontra Monsieur Saint Jean. Monsieur Saint Jean, d'où venez vous ? Je viens d'Ave Salus. Vous n'avez point vu le bon Dieu ; si est, il est dans l'arbre de la croix, les pieds pendans, les mains clouans, un petit chapeaux d'épine blanche sur la tête.

“ Qui la dira trois fois, au soir, trois fois au matin, gagnera le Paradis à la fin.”

Of this book, quoted by Mr. Smith, another correspondent P P.P. in the same volume, p. 511, gives a very interesting notice ; from which it appears that it was first published at Rome in Latin in 1502, and was several times reprinted and early translated into French, in which language it has passed through many editions. It consists of a collection of prayers, many of which are those used by the Church, but for the most part burlesqued or disfigured and adopted for the purposes of sorcery as practised in the Middle Ages ; among whom the book held the rank of a text-book ; while it enjoyed great popu-

larity among the rustic population from its containing many charms connected with rustic pursuits. P.P.P. adds, *La Pate-Nôtre blanche* is referred to in terms of reprobation by Jean B. Thiers, who says ; “ La prière ridicule que l'on appelle *La Pate-Nôtre blanche*, dont les zélateurs, qui sont en assez grand nombre, et surtout a la campagne, promettent infalliblement le paradis à ceus qui la disent tous les jours.” P.P.P. does not give any reference to this passage, which is, I presume, taken from that curious book of Thiers, *Traité des Superstitions qui regardent les Sacramens*, of which I have a copy in 4 vols., 4th edition, Paris, 1774.

Mr. Smith explained afterwards that he was perfectly aware that the book had no claim to be considered as a book of genuine devotion, and that it was essentially a magical work, his copy being followed by the *Grimoire*, a book of black magic, and full of diabolical incantations.

Let me refer such of my readers as may desire to know more of these curious specimens of French popular literature to Nisard's interesting *Histoire des Livres populaires, ou De la Littérature du Colporteur*, 2^{me} ed. Paris, 1864. *Le Grand Gimoire* is described at p. 129 et seq. of the first volume, and the *Enchiridion* at pp. 148 et seq. of same volume.

At the risk of sharing the reproach levelled at Gratiano of “ speaking an infinite deal of nothing, more than any man in all Venice,” I must trespass upon my readers with another reference to *Notes and Queries* (1st S. viii. 613), not only for its version of the White Pater-noster, in this case connected with Saint Peter's Brother, but for the curious charms illustrative of our Folk-Lore in the reign of James I., which the writer found on turning over an old book of Controversial Divinity, White's *Way to the True Church*, fo. 1624, and which all students of folk-lore will, I think, read with interest.

The extract is a long one, but I think as curious and valuable as it is long.

White is insisting upon “ the prodigious ignorance ” which he found among his parishioners when he entered upon his ministrations, and he proceeds thus to tell his own tale :—

"I will only mention what I saw and learned, dwelling among them, concerning the saying of their prayers; for what man is he whose heart trembles not to see simple people so far seduced that they know not how to pronounce or say their daily prayers; or so to pray that all that hear them shall be filled with laughter? And while, superstitiously, they refuse to pray in their own language with understanding, they speak that which their leaders may blush to hear. These examples I have observed from the common people.

THE CREED.

"Creezum zuum patrum onitentem creatorum ejus anicum. Dominum nostrum qui sum sops, virgini Mariæ, crixus fixus, Ponchi Pilati audubitiers, morti by sonday, father a fernes, scelorest un judicarum, finis a mortibus. Creezum spirituum sanctum, eeli Catholi, remissurum, peccaturum, communiorum obliviorum, bitam, et turnam again."

THE LITTLE CREED.

"Little Creed, can I need,
Kneelee before our Ladies knee;
Candle light, candles burne,
Our Ladie pray'd to her deare Sonne
That we might all to heaven come,
Little Creed, Amen."

"This that followeth they call the 'White Paternoster:'

"White Pater-noster, Saint Peter's brother,
What hast i' th t'one hand? white booke leaves,
What hast i' th t'other hand? heaven yate keyes.
Open heaven yates, and streike [shut] hell yates:
And let every crysome child creepe to its owne mother.
White Paternoster, Amen."

"Another Prayer:

"I blesse me with God and the rood,
With his sweet flesh and precious blood;
With his crosse and his creed,
With his length and his breed,
From my toe to my crowne,
And all my body up and downe,
From my back to my brest,
My five wits be my rest;
God let never ill come at ill,
But through Jesus owne will,
Sweet Jesus, Lord. Amen."

"Many also use to weare vervein against blasts; and, when they

gather it for this purpose, firste they crosse the herbe with their hand, and they blesse it thus :

“Hallowed be thou, Vervein,
As thou growest on the ground,
For in the Mount of Calvary
There thou wast first found.
Thou healedst our Saviour Jesus Christ,
And staunchedst his bleeding wound ;
In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost,
I take thee from the ground.”

These passages may be seen in “The Preface to the Reader,” sec. 13, no page, but on the reverse of Sig. A 4.

The writer of this interesting communication winds up his paper with the following very valuable suggestion, which I earnestly commend to the consideration of such members of the Folk-Lore Society as, with a desire to promote its objects, may at any time come across any of these uninviting bulky folios of Controversial Divinity, and may have leisure to turn the opportunity to good account :

“It might at first appear somewhat strange that these interesting remnants of early belief should have escaped the notice of your numerous correspondents, whose attention has for so long a period been directed to this inquiry ; but this may be accounted for if we remember that the volume in which they occur is one which would seem *primâ facie* least likely to afford any such materials. It is one of those uninviting bulky folios of which the reigns of James and Charles I. furnish us with so many specimens. Here we might fairly expect to discover abundant illustrations of patristic and scholastic theology, of learning and pedantry, of earnest devotion, and ill-temper no less earnest ; but nothing whereby to illustrate the manners or customs, the traditions, or the popular usages or superstitions of the common people. This may be a hint for us, however, to direct our attention to a class of literature which hitherto has scarcely received the attention to which it would appear to be entitled ; and I would venture to express my conviction, that, if those who are interested in the illustration of our popular antiquities were to give a little of their time to early English theology, the result would be more important than might at first be anticipated.”

WILLIAM J. THOMS.

PLANT-LORE NOTES

TO MRS. LATHAM'S WEST SUSSEX SUPERSTITIONS.



HAVING had the privilege of reading in proof Mrs. Latham's charming little monograph of West Sussex Folk-Lore, which may well serve as a model for other papers of similar character, I am induced to offer a few hurried notes upon some of the plant-lore therein recorded. I regret that time does not permit me to make similar comments upon the whole paper, so far as it relates to natural history, in the folk-lore of which I am especially interested; but I trust to have an opportunity at some future period of bringing before the members some further communications upon this subject, and may therefore perhaps be allowed to say how glad I shall be to receive information regarding the folk-lore of any branch of natural history.

The Blackberry.

P. 14 (60). I am informed that in some parts of Ireland it is believed that the devil puts his foot on the blackberries after Michaelmas day; and Threlkeld, in his *Synopsis Stirpium Hibernicarum* (1727), speaking of blackberries, mentions as a "vulgar error" the belief that "after Michaelmas the D——l casts his club over them."

The Hazel Nut.

P. 14 (61). In Suffolk and Kent (*Notes and Queries*, 4th Series, ix. 166), and in Lincolnshire (*ibid.* 225), Holy Rood Day (Sept. 14th) was supposed to be the special occasion when nutters were likely to meet the devil, or "to come to grief of some kind." This is the more strange, seeing that the same day was recognised by

others as especially suited to nutting; thus in "Grim the Collier" Act ii. sc. i. (1662) we have the lines—

"To-morrow is Holy Rood day
When all a nutting take their way."

See also Brand (Bohn's edition), i. 353, and *Notes and Queries*, 1st series, x. 263, where a long account is given of the keeping of the "festival of nutting-day" at Penryn, Cornwall, "on some particular day in September or October," which was in all probability the day above named.

The Yarrow.

P. 32 (100). The use of this plant in love-divinations is widespread. In Suffolk it is employed in a curious manner: a leaf is placed in the nose, with the intention of making it bleed, while the following lines are recited :—

"Green 'arrow, green 'arrow, you bears a white blow,
If my love love me, my nose will bleed now ;
If my love don't love me, it 'ont bleed a drop ;
If my love do love me, 'twill bleed every drop."

The old English name of the plant, Nose-bleed, may have been bestowed upon it either because "the leaves being put into the nose do cause it to bleede, and easeth the paine of the megrim," as Gerard tells us;* or because, on the contrary, "assuredly it will stay the bleeding of it."† The styptic properties of the plant are alluded to in the names Bloodwort and Carpenters'-grass, both given by Treveris in the Grete Herball, and in the Scotch name Stanch-girss. Drayton refers to

"The yarrow wherewithal he stops the new-made gore."

In Dublin on Mayday, or the preceding night, women place a stocking filled with yarrow under their pillow, reciting the following lines :—

"Good morrow, good yarrow, good morrow to thee,
I hope by the morrow my lover to see ;
And that he may be married to me.
The colour of his hair and the clothes he does wear,
And if he be for me may his face be turned to me,
And if he be not, dark and surly may he be,
And his back be turned to me."

* *Herbal*, p. 615.

† Parkinson's *Theatrum Botanicum*, p. 695.

A shorter form of these lines is recited in Wicklow by girls on Hallow Eve, while pulling the plant ; “ a person using the invocation was obliged to retire for the night without speaking.”* Mr. Halliwell † says : “ An ounce of yarrow, sewed up in flannel, must be placed under your pillow when you go to bed, and, having repeated the following words, the required dream [of a future husband] will be realised :

Thou pretty herb of Venus' tree,
Thy true name it is yarrow ;
Now who my bosom friend must be,
Pray tell thou me to-morrow.”

It does not seem quite clear from the context whether this is an Eastern Counties custom.

Having said so much about yarrow, two other notes may be added. The gathering of the plant with an incantation was one of the charges against one Elspeth Reoch, on her trial for witchcraft in March, 1616. It was alleged that she had plucked “ ane herb called melefour ”—in which name we see a modification of milfoil, another name of the plant,—sitting on her right knee, and pulling it “ betwixt the mid-finger and thombe, and saying of In nomine Patris, Filii, et Spiritus Sancti.” By the plant so gathered she was enabled to cure distemper and to impart the faculty of prediction. There is no doubt that the yarrow was the plant referred to, as the “ melefour ” is said to be the herb “ quhilk causis the nose bleed.”

Mr. E. P. Shirley ‡ speaks of having been engaged in an important land case, when he “ received, in a very secret and mysterious manner, a little packet from an old woman, with an assurance that if I would keep it it would assuredly bring me luck.” Success attended his efforts ; and the packet, on being opened, was found to contain some dried yarrow, of which the old woman said “ that it was the first herb our Saviour put in His hand when a child, and that therefore,” she added, “ to those who were by tradition acquainted with that fact, it would certainly bring luck.”

* *Irish Folk-Lore* : by “ Lageniensis.” (1870).

† *Popular Rhymes*, p. 223.

‡ *Notes and Queries*, 4th series, x. 24.

The Ash.

P. 41 (129). In *Science-Gossip* for 1865, p. 85, a correspondent, "R. H." (Mr. Robert Holland), gives the following as a Cheshire remedy for warts in connection with the ash-tree, "which is by many implicitly believed in." "*Steal* a piece of bacon; rub the warts with it; then cut a slit in the bark of an ash-tree, raise up a piece of the bark, put in the bacon, and close the bark down again. In a short time the warts will die away from the hand, but will make their appearance on the bark of the tree as rough excrescences. This remedy has been quite successful in the case of my man, who told me!" A Leicestershire remedy, corresponding more closely with the East Sussex formula, will be found in *Notes and Queries*, 1st series, vii. 81.

Unlucky Plants.

The bringing of a solitary primrose into the house (pp. 52, 174-5) is considered unlucky in East Anglia. In *Notes and Queries* 1st series, vii. 201, "E. G. R." (the late Rev. Edward Gillett, of Rainham) says, "My gravity was sorely tried by being called on to settle a quarrel between two old women, arising from one of them having given one primrose to her neighbour's child, for the purpose of making her hens hatch but one chicken out of each set of eggs, and it was seriously maintained that the charm had been successful." It is subsequently stated that geese are specially influenced by this charm; in Worcestershire less than a handful of primroses or violets, taken into the house, will bring destruction to the young ducks and chickens.* In some parts of Essex it is believed that sickness or death will ensue if the blossoms of the whitethorn be brought into a house; in Norfolk, that no one will be married from the house during the year. In Switzerland it is also considered "unlucky" to bring the flowers indoors.† Many of our English spring wild flowers are regarded, in different parts of the country, as of ill-omen. In Cumberland, about Cockermouth for example, the red campion (*Lychnis diurna*) is called "mother-dee," and there is a superstition among the children

* *Notes and Queries*, 2nd series, iii. 343.

† *Notes and Queries*, 4th series viii. 4.

that if they pluck it some misfortune will happen to their parents: "Death-come-quickly," a West Cumberland name for the herb robert (*Geranium Robertianum*), seems to point to some similar belief. In some parts of Yorkshire it is said that if a child gathers the germander speedwell (*Veronica Chamædrys*) its mother will die during the year. In Middlesex, schoolboys offer to their uninitiated companions a plant of the shepherd's purse (*Capsella Bursa-pastoris*), and request them to pluck off one of the heart-shaped seed-pods, which done, they exclaim, "You've picked your mother's heart out!" This was practised at Chelsea in my own school-days; and, as a Lancashire name for the plant is "Mother's-heart," it seems likely that the custom is widely extended. Something of the same sort exists in Birmingham: Mr. W. Macmillan* says: "I remember when at school at Birmingham that my playmates manifested a very great repugnance to this plant. . . . Very few of them would touch it, and it was known to us by the two bad names 'Naughty man's plaything' and 'Pick your mother's heart out.'" Dr. Berthold Seemann† says, that in Hanover, as well as, according to Hartmann, in the Swiss Canton of St. Gall, the same plant is offered to an uninitiated person with a request to pluck off one of the pods; should he do so, the others exclaim, "You have stolen a purse of gold from your father and mother!" It is interesting to find that a common tropical weed, *Ageratum conyzoides*, is employed by children in Venezuela in a very similar manner. Dr. Ernst gives its vernacular Venezuelan name as "Rompes araguëlo," and says,‡ "It is explained by some as 'rompes á tu abuelo' (you tear your grandfather), with reference to a child's play. One child takes hold of the lower part of a leaf, another of the upper. If one pulls as hard as to tear the leaf, the other exclaims, 'Rompes á tu abuelo.'"

JAMES BRITTEN.

* *Science-Gossip*, xi. (1876) 94.

† *Hannoversche Sitten und Gebräuche in ihrer Beziehung zur Pflanzenwelt* (Leipzig, 1862), p. 33.

‡ Seemann's *Journal of Botany*, iii. 316 (1865).

YORKSHIRE LOCAL RHYMES AND SAYINGS.



NOT the least interesting amongst the items of folk-lore are the expressions of popular wisdom contained in those local rhymes, proverbs, and sayings which are to be met with throughout the country. Nor are these altogether deficient in historical value, as bearing in some instances upon the manners and customs of the past, or upon the social history and conditions of places and districts.

Many of the following instances from Yorkshire were published in a small pamphlet by the late Mr. Reginald W. Corlass, and placed at the disposal of the Council of the Society for use when opportunity should arise. By the assistance of Mr. Edward Hailstone, F.S.A., some considerable additions have been made to the original collection; and it was thought that the result might be placed on record now, as a first instalment of similar collections for the remaining counties of England, for many additional sayings in connection with particular localities have come to light since Ray's time, and, moreover, it now becomes necessary to gather together much more useful information as to the origin of these sayings—information which will afford the student of English History and Topography occasional glimpses into olden times.

1. To begin with the capital city, York seems anciently to have been held in high popular regard:

“Lincoln was, London is, and York shall be,
The fairest city of the three,

runs the old saying, mentioned both by Fuller in his *Worthies of England* and by Stukeley in the *Itinerarium Curiosum*. The former authority says, “That Lincoln was—namely a far fairer, greater, richer

city than now it is—both plainly appears by the ruins thereof, being without controversie the greatest city in the kingdom of Mercia. That London is, we know; but that York *shall* be, God knows.” Those who hope that it may become the English metropolis, he adds, “Must wait until the river Thames runs under the great arch of Ouse bridge.” Mr. Hazlitt, in his collection of *English Proverbs and Proverbial Phrases*, p. 211, mentions a proverb connecting York with London—

“I cannot be at York and London at the same time,”

which probably may have some reference to Dick Turpin’s famous ride, the hero having made his journey so rapidly from London to York that it was thought impossible he could be at both places on the same day, and, therefore, his friends attempted to set up an alibi for his defence.

A Yorkshire song of the sixteenth century, which is given at length in the opening pages of Halliwell’s *Yorkshire Anthology*, also greatly praises this city, in the following words of the chorus:

“Yorke, Yorke, for my monie:
Of all the citties that ever I see,
For mery pastime and companie,
Except the cittie of London.”

2. A similar idea is expressed in the old saying, “Merry Wakefield.” Fuller is puzzled to know why such should be said of this place, unless proceeding from “fruitful soyl and cheap country, and, where good chear and company are the premisses, mirth (in common consequence) will be the conclusion.” But we may almost look upon the celebrated Pindar of Wakefield as the author of this expression—“Merry Wakefield and her Pindar too.” See upon this a communication signed “St. Swithin” in *Notes and Queries*, 2nd series, xi. 310. The old legend says that the Pindar (the celebrated George-a-Green) met and thrashed both Robin Hood and Little John; and a poem given in Halliwell’s *Yorkshire Anthology* (p. 154) speaks of—

. “that towne, which hath, in former time,
So flourish’d and so gloried in her name,
Famous by th’ Pindar, who first rais’d the same!”

The Pindar of Wakefield’s Legend is the title of a small privately-printed octavo, and *The History of George-a-Green, the Pindar of Wakefield*, was published in London, 12mo., 1715, illustrated with woodcuts.

3. The growing prosperity of Hull seems also to have been anciently predicted:

“ When Dighton is pulled down,
Hull shall become a great town.”

Ray says, in his *English Proverbs* (p. 264), “Dighton is a small town, not a mile distant from Hull, and was in the time of the late wars for the most part pulled down. Let Hull make the best they can of it.” *Dighton* is supposed to be an error for *Myton*, and in 1642, when the town was threatened by Charles I., some houses in Myton Lane, as well as the Charter House, were laid in ruins by the governor, Sir John Hotham, that they might not be occupied by the royal army. But another suggestion, made by Mr. Edward Solly in *Long Ago* for February, 1874, is certainly equally suggestive with the above. “The saying,” says Mr. Solly, “if it rests only upon *Ray’s Proverbs*, may certainly be a misprint, and there does not seem to be any evidence of the existence of a village called Dighton within a mile of Hull before 1640. There was a small place called *Drypole*, on the east bank of the river Hull, just beyond the castle, which was occupied by the besiegers in 1643, and which was then in great part destroyed. This Drypole was never rebuilt as an independent place after the siege, but was gradually absorbed into the city of Hull; and the prophecy was certainly fulfilled, not as regards Dighton, but as regards Drypole, when its ruins were pulled down and the new buildings of the eastern part of Hull raised in their place.”

“ You have eaten some Hull cheese,”

means that you are intoxicated. Hull cheese we are told, through Nares’ *Glossary*, from *Taylor’s Works* (1631), “is much like a loafe out of a brewer’s basket, cousin germain to the mightiest ale in England.”

“ Oxford for learning,
London for wit,
Hull for women,
and York for a tit,”

is given in Hazlitt’s *English Proverbs and Proverbial Phrases* (p. 312), and another saying in connection with this town—

From Hell, Hull, and Halifax, good Lord deliver us—

is stated by Fuller to be a part of the "beggars' and vagabonds'" litany. Hull is "terrible unto them as a town of good government, where vagrants meet with punitive charity, and, 'tis to be feared, are oftener corrected than amended." The magistrates of Hull were in olden times known for the stringent measures they took to suppress vice. In 1599 we read that a Bench order was made that each alderman should take an account of all vagabonds, idle persons, sharpers, beggars, &c., in his ward, and punish them severely. They were also to notice absentees from divine service on Sundays, and punish them.

4. "Halifax," continues Fuller, "is formidable unto them for the law thereof." This law, known as the Halifax Gibbet Law, provided that a felon taken with stolen goods in his possession, or upon confession, should after trial be beheaded within three market-days after the deed, with an instrument of a similar design to the guillotine.

The origin of this so-called law is curiously related in *The History of Thomas of Reading; or the Six Worthy Yeomen of the West*, which is included by Mr. Thoms in his edition of *Early Prose Romances*, and is perhaps worth quoting here. King Henry the First, before his departure into France, asked to be informed by the clothiers of England "if there be any thing not yet granted that may benefit you, or any other thing to be removed that doth hurt you?" Among the answers thereto "was a griefe, whereof Hodgekins of Hallifax complained, and that was: That whereas the Towne of Hallifax liued altogether vpon cloathing, and by reason of false borderers, and other euill minded persons, they were oft robbed, and had their clothes carried out of their fieldes, where they were drying, That it would please his Majestie to graunt the Towne this priuilege, That whatsoever he was that was taken stealing their Cloth, might presently without any further tryall be hanged up." The King's answer to this part of their request was: "Content thee, Hodgekins, for we will have redresse for all; and albeit that hanging of men was never seene in England, yet seeing the corrupt world is growne more bold in all wickednesse, I thinke it not amisse to ordain this death for such malefactors, and peculiarly to the towne of Hallifax I giue this priuilege, That whoso-

ever they finde stealing their Cloth, being taken with the goods, that without further iudgement they shall be hanged up." But even this rigorous law did not work well. Later on we are humorously told how one Wallis escaped his hanging because there was no one to hang him! "A plague vpon you, quoth he [Wallis], you have hindred me God knowes what; I made account to dine this day in heauen, and you keepe me here on earth where there is not a quarter of that good cheare." But Hodgekins went a step still further. He "posted it vp to the Court, and told his Maiesty that the priuelege of Hallifax was not worth a pudding. Why so? said the King. Because, quoth Hodgekins, we can get neuer a hangman to trusse our theeues, but if it shall like your good Grace (quoth he) there is a feate Fryar, that will make vs a deuise, which shall without the hand of man cut off the craggess of all such carles, if your Maiesty will please to allow thereof. The King, vnderstanding the full effect of the matter, at length granted his petition. Whereupon till this day it is observed in Hallifax, that such as are taken stealing of their cloth, haue their heads chopt off with the same gin." (See *Early Prose Romances*, edited by W. J. Thoms, vol. i.; *The Pleasant Historie of Thomas of Reading*, pp. 27, 29, 62.) John Taylor, the water poet, has the following lines in reference to this custom:

"At Hallifax the law so sharpe doth deale,
That whoso more than thirteen pence doth steale,
They have a jyn that wondrous quick and well
Sends thieves all headless into heaven or hell."

And in *A New Age of Old Names* (small 4to, 1609), the Reverend Jos. Wybarne alludes to it while speaking of "obstinacie": "Which scruilefieth a man to his will so that hee becomes, like Maecenas, a thousand times married to the same wife, always iarring, yet alwayes faint to be reconciled; the ground of this phrenzie is, that men will before they deliberate, first executing the prisoner, then enquiring of his demerits, as men say they doe at Halifax." (*Notes and Queries*, 5th series, iv. 154.) Chambers, in the *Book of Days*, gives an account of the operation of the law in several instances (see June 2nd);

and Watson's *History of Halifax* contains a list of persons who suffered. Gibbet Lane is still the name of a well-known thoroughfare in Halifax. But this famous law has a special book devoted to it: *Halifax and its Gibbet-Law placed in a true Light*. This is stated to be printed at London for William Bentley, 1708. But Lowndes says the real author was Dr. Samuel Midgley. It contains a woodcut of the gibbet, and gives an account of the origin of the custom, as arising from the manorial privileges of the manor of Wakefield, of which Halifax is part. Indeed, the identical axe belonging to the Halifax gibbet is kept by the steward of the manor of Wakefield. This leads us back from tradition to history again, and Sir Francis Palgrave has placed on record the archaic position which English history must afford to the Halifax Gibbet Law. (See *English Commonwealth*, i. 213.)

In connection with Halifax we have also the expression, "Go to Halifax." This expression is well known in Lancashire (see *Notes and Queries*, 5th series, iv. 154), and was very common about Looe, in East Cornwall, about fifty years ago (*ibid.*) It has also travelled to America (*ibid.* p. 66). It is a mild substitute for a direction to go to a place not to be named to ears polite.

The woollen manufacturers of Flanders, during the persecution in their own country, sought refuge in England in great numbers, and many are said to have settled in Halifax. A similarity is also said to exist between the local dialect and that of Friesland and the low countries, whence the following distich:—

"Gooide brade, botter, and sheese,
Is gooid Halifax and gooid Friese."

5. Our national fate seems at one time to have depended upon the town of Sheffield, if we may believe the following:—

"When Sheffield park is ploughed and sown
Then little England hold thine own."

Unfortunately for the fulfilment of this, the park alluded to has long since been ploughed and sown.

6. Other sayings, however, are more favourable to this district:

“Winkabank* and Templebrough,†
Will buy all England, through and through.”

These places are in the neighbourhood of Sheffield.

7. And again—

“When all the world shall be aloft,
Then Hallamshire shall be God’s croft.”

8. Formerly there stood an ancient stone cross at Sprotborough, near Doncaster, bearing the following lines on a brass plate:—

“Whoso is hungry and lists well to eat,
Let him come to Spotborough for his meat;
And for a night and a day
His horse shall have both corn and hay,
And none shall ask him when he goes away.”

The Rev. Scott Surtees, in his *Waifs and Strays of North Humber History* [1864], is of opinion that these rhymes refer to the ancient sanctuary laws of King Alfred, providing that protection should be given to any criminal who betook himself to a “Minster House” for the space of three nights, whereby opportunity was given him to arrange his defence or to compound for his crime.

9. The following is given in Hazlitt’s *English Proverbs and Proverbial Phrases* (p. 226), but without any explanation of its origin:—

“If you go to Nun Keling, you shall find your belly filling
of whig or of whay;
But go to Swine, and come betime,
or else you go empty away.
But the Abbot of Meaus doth keep a good house
by night and by day.”

Swine, Meaus, and Nun Keling (now Nunkeeling) are in the East Riding.

10. And another from the same authority (p. 395) is—

“Ther’s a hill again a stack all Craven through,”

which is equivalent to every bean hath its black. Craven is in the hilly part of the West Riding.

* Now Wincobank.

† Remains of a Roman town have lately been discovered here.

11. Another proverb,—

“Like the Parson of Saddlewick, who can read in no book but his own,”

is referable to a Yorkshire town. Grose ascribes this to “Cheshire proverbs.” But no such place as Saddlewick is known to have ever existed in England, and the proverb was well known in 1828 at Saddleworth, a large district in the West Riding of Yorkshire, the wildest part of which borders on Lancashire, and was formerly in the diocese of Chester. This would appear to have been a likely spot for such a saying to be used about the parson. Britton, in his *Beauties of England* (vol. ix. p. 299), quotes from Whitaker’s *History of Whalley* (p. 433): “The chapel of Saddleworth was erected by William de Stapleton, lord of that *remote* and *barbarous* tract, in the end of the twelfth or beginning of the thirteenth century.” (See *Notes and Queries*, 4th series, xii. 388, 524.)

12. In connection with Paull, a village on the Humber some seven miles eastward of Hull, is the following couplet:—

“High Paull, and low Paull, and Paull Holme,
The never was a fair maid married at Paull town.”

The truth of this is obvious from the fact of the church standing by itself on an eminence nearly a quarter of a mile from the village.

13. The following lines explain themselves. Pendle is a high hill in Lancashire, and the two others are on the border of Yorkshire near Settle:—

“Pendle, Ingleborough, and Pennigent,
Are the three highest hills between Scotland and Trent.”

The same has also been expressed in—

“Pendle, Pennington, and Ingleborough,
Are the three highest hills all England through.”

14. In the following distich Spenser describes the characteristics of well-known Yorkshire rivers:—

“Still Are, swift Wherfe, with Oze the most of might,
High Swale, unquiet Nidd, and troublous Skell.”

15. To trustworthy persons the expression has been applied—

“As true steel as Rippon rowels,”

i.e. spurs. The best spurs were formerly made at Ripon, which, says Fuller, “may be inforced to strike through a shilling, and will break sooner than bow.” Drayton, in the *Polyolbion*, *Song* ii. p. 71, thus alludes to the fame of this district in these manufactures:—

“The Lands that over Ouse to Barwick forth doe bear,
Have for their Blazon had the Snaffle, Spur, and Spear.”

16. We may, perhaps, here most appropriately mention a saying given by Ray in reference to an imputed characteristic of Yorkshiremen, and contained in the words—

“Shake a bridle over a Yorkshireman’s grave and he will arise and steal a horse.”

17. As “sure as a louse in Pomfret,” speaks ill for that place.

18. Of Cleveland it is said—

“Cleaveland in the clay, bring twa shun, carry yane away.”

Or, as Ray has popularized it—

“Cleveland in the clay,
Bring in two soles and carry one away.”

Which is explained from the fact that the ways in winter-time were very foul and deep.

Weather-wisdom is largely dealt with in these popular rhymes. Thus—

“When Roseberry Topping wears a cappe,
Let Cleveland then beware a clappe.”

This cap refers to the mist overhanging the lofty hill bearing that name in the North Riding, previously to a thunderstorm. Camden, who notices this proverb, observes, that, “when its top begins to be darkened with clouds, rain generally follows.”

There are variations of the distich—

“When Roseberry Topping wears a cap,
Let Cleveland men beware of a rap.”

And allusions to other places are made in some of the variants. Thus (19)—

“When Roseberry Topping wears a hat,
Morden carre will suffer for that.”

The latter place cannot be exactly indicated, but doubtless from its name, *carre*, some lowland likely to be flooded in wet weather.

20. From the *Denham Tracts*, privately printed at Richmond, Durham, and Newcastle upon-Tyne, in various years since 1850, we have—

“When Eston nabbe puts on a cloake,
And Roysberrie a cappe,
Then all the folks on Cleveland’s clay
Ken there will be a clappe.”

Eston Nabbe is near the end of the mountain chain of that part of Yorkshire leading to the estuary of the river Tees, five miles distant from Middlesbrough, and now noted for its ironstone mines. The soil in this part of Cleveland is a heavy clay description.

21. Another set of these rhymes gives us the following :—

“When Hood Hill has on its cap,
Hamilton’s sure to come down with a clap.”

The places are on the hills of the Cleveland district, but should be called “How Hill,” three miles from Stokesley, and “Hambleton,” generally spoken as Hamilton, seven miles from Thirsk. Hamilton Moor is celebrated as a training-ground for horses (*Denham Tracts*).

22. Of Rawdon Billing it is said—

“When Billing Hill puts on its cap,
Calverley Mill will get a slap.”

Billing is the highest point of the hill in Rawdon, dividing the valleys of the rivers Wharfe and Aire; on the latter is Calverley Mill,—not far off the village where the tragedy was committed, and the foundation of the play, “The Yorkshire Tragedy,” ascribed by some to Shakspeare.

23. Another of these rhymes says—

“When Oliver’s Mount puts on his hat,
Scarborough town will pay for that.”

Scarborough also furnishes us with a satirical saying conveyed in the term “A Scarborough warning,” which is indeed no warning at all. Fuller traces this to the circumstance of the castle being seized by Thomas Stafford in 1557, before the townsmen were aware of his intention. By the exertion and industry of the Earl of Westmoreland

however he was secured, taken to London, and beheaded within six days. (Nichols's *Fuller's Worthies*, ii. 494.) Another explanation of this saying is that it was anciently the custom to fire from Scarborough Castle without warning upon passing vessels which did not strike their sails. It has also been referred to a custom similar to the Halifax Gibbet Law. Thus it is alluded to in *A Brief Ballad touching the traitorous taking of Scarborough Castle: Imprinted at London, in Fleet Street, by Tho: Powell*; the eighth verse of which is as follows:—

“This term, *Scarborough Warning*, grew (some say)
By hasty hanging, for rank robbery there
Who that was met, but suspect in that way,
Straight was he trussed up, whatever he were;
Whereupon, thieves thinking good to forbear
Scarborough robbing, they let that alone,
And took Scarborough warning every one.”

See *A Bundle of Ballads in the Black letter, Laid open to view in modern type and orthography*, 1550—60—70. Reprinted by Chas: Hindley, in part iii. of *Miscellanea Antiqua Anglicum*.

It is mentioned by Tusser in his *Five Hundred Points of Good Husbandry*, the first edition of which was issued in 1557 (the year in which Fuller supposes the saying to have originated), as “A Hundreth good Pointes of Husbandrie,” and the edition, as it at present stands, was published in 1573. This seems to suggest an earlier origin. Tusser's lines are—

“Be surety seldom (but never for much),
For fear of purse, pennyless, hanging by such;
Or Scarborow warning, as ill I believe,
When (Sir, I arrest ye!) gets hold of thy sleeve.”

(*Dr. Mavor's Edition*, p. xxvii.)

It is also mentioned in a letter by Toby Matthew, Bishop of Durham, to Hutton, Archbishop of York, dated Jan. 19, 1603. (See *Notes and Queries*, 4th series, xii. 408.) Dr. Chambers says, “In the parish of Anwoth, in the stewartry of Kirkcudbright, there is a rivulet called Skyreburn, which usually appears as gentle and innocent as a child; but, from having its origin in the spacious bosom of the neighbouring hills, it is liable, on an ordinary fall of rain, to come

down suddenly in prodigious volume and vehemence The abruptness of the danger has given rise to a proverbial expression, generally used throughout the south-west of Scotland—*Skyreburn warning*. It is easy to conceive that this local phrase, when heard south of the Tweed, would be mistaken for Scarborough warning.” (*The Book of Days*, Jan. 19.) But another and not improbable explanation is yet to be noted, which, if it should turn out to be the true origin of the saying, will afford a good example of analogy not always being the result of imitation. In the Diary of Abraham de la Pryme we read, “Scarburg Warning is a proverb in many places of the north, signifying any sudden warning given upon any account. Some think it arose from the sudden coming of an enemy against the castle there, and, having discharged a broadside, then commands them to surrender. Others think that the proverb had its original from other things, but all varys. However, this is the true origin thereof: The town is a corporation town, and, tho’ it is very poor now to what it was formerly, yet it has a who is commonly a poor man, they haveing no rich ones amongst them. About two days before Michilmass day the sayd being arrayed in his gown of state he mounts upon horseback, and has his attendants with him, and the macebear[er] carrying the mace before him, with two fiddlers and a base viol. Thus marching in state (as bigg as the lord mare of London) all along the shore side, they make many halts, and the cryer crys thus with a strange sort of a singing voice, high and low:—

Whay! Whay! Whay!
 Pay your gavelage ha!
 Between this and Michaelmas Day,
 Or you’ll be fined I say!

Then the fiddlers begin to dance, and caper, and play, fit to make one burst with laughter that sees and hears them. Then they go on again and crys as before, with the greatest majesty and gravity imaginable, none of this comical crew being seen so much as to smile all the time, when us spectators are almost bursten with laughing. This is the true origin of the proverb, for this custome of gavelage is a certain tribute that every house pays to the when he is

pleased to call for it, and he gives not above one day warning, and may call for it when he pleases." (*Diary of A. de la Pryme*, p. 126.)

24. There is a Yorkshire saying applied to a man who quits his friends too early at a convivial meeting, that—

"He will be hanged for leaving his liquor, like the saddler of Bawtry,"

which is thus explained:—Between the city of York and its place of execution was an inn, called for many years the "Gallows House," at which the procession with condemned persons was accustomed to stop that they might regale themselves. The saddler in question however refused this refreshment and hastened on to execution. Too late a reprieve arrived which would have saved his life had he only waited as was usual at the inn.

25. Dr. Whitaker in his *Loidis* and *Elmete* commences the description of the Vale of Calder by the old distich—

"Castleford women must needs be fair,
Because they wash both in Calder and Aire."

Castleford is an old Roman station at the junction of the two West Riding rivers, where the Calder ceases. No reason is given for the rhyme, and the ablution would now be of a doubtful nature, as these rivers are as black as ink and contain a great portion of the sewage of the West Riding.

26. We hear as a local proverb of "*Dunmow* bacon and *Doncaster* daggers."

27 :—

"If Brayton Bargh, and Hamelton Hough, and Burton bream,
Warr all in thy belly, it would ne'er be team,"

is spoken of a covetous and insatiable person whom nothing will content. Brayton, Hamilton, and Burton are all situate between Cawood and Pontefract.

28. The village of Raskelfe, which is usually pronounced Rascall, furnishes an instance of what are called People and Steeple rhymes. Of this place it is said—

"A wooden church, a wooden steeple,
Rascally church, rascally people."

29. There are also some lines in connection with the church at Hornsea, a watering-place in the East Riding. The low square tower of this church once bore a tall spire, which fell in a gale in the year 1773, and there is a local superstition that a stone was found on the occasion with the following inscription:—

“Hornsea broch I built thee,
Thou wast ten miles from Beverley,
Ten miles from Bridlington,
And ten miles from the sea.”

30. The town of Wetherby has earned from causes not now explainable the following saying, about which information has been asked in *Notes and Queries* (1st series, vii. 233), but with no response:—

“The woful town o’ Wetherby.”

31. The following saying is connected with a very interesting tradition:—

“There are no rats at Hatfield, nor sparrows at Lindholme.”

Abraham de la Pryme probably refers to the tradition in his *Diary* (see p. 146); and an account is to be found in Hunter’s *South Yorkshire* (i. 196), and in Stonehouse’s *Isle of Axholme* (p. 393). Near Hatfield Woodhouse, in the centre of the Great Hatfield turf-moor, were formerly about sixty acres of land, known by the name of Lindholme. “It is a prevalent opinion,” says Hunter, “that here once dwelt some extraordinary personage who is known by no other name than that of William of Lindholme; a species of Prospero, who was in league with infernal spirits, and who was endued with strength far surpassing the ordinary strength of man. Two immense boulder stones called ‘the thumb-stone’ and ‘the little finger-stone’ are supposed to have been brought hither by him.” Amongst the many traditionary stories related concerning him is one to the effect that, when he was a boy, his parents went to Wroot Feast, and left him to keep the sparrows from the corn or hemp-seed. The account is that he drove all the sparrows into a barn, which was then being built, and still unroofed, and confined them there by placing a harrow against the door. After he had done this, William followed his parents to Wroot; and, when scolded for so doing, he said he had fastened up all the

sparrows in a barn, where they found them on their return in the evening, one version says all dead, except a few which were turned white. Since this transaction it is said that no sparrows were ever seen at Lindholme.

32. In the *Denham Tracts* we find—

“The fairest lady in this land
Was drowned at Mont Ferrand.”

In Langdale's *Topographical History of Yorkshire*, 1822, Mont Ferrand is named as a farm-house in the parish of Birdsall, $4\frac{1}{2}$ miles from Malton, North Riding, while Denham, in his *Folk-Lore*, mentions it as near Beverley, and that foundations of an ancient castle still exist. No explanation of the distich is now obtainable.

33. “You might as well try to bore a hole through Beacon Hill.”

This saying is no doubt in allusion to the Beacon Hill immediately adjacent to, and rising to a considerable and precipitous height above, the town of Halifax. This hill is described in Wright's *History of Halifax* (1738) “as a high and almost insurmountable rock all overgrown with trees and thick underwood mixed with huge and craggy stones.” The hill is now pierced by a tunnel of one of the West Riding Railways for a distance of three-quarters of a mile, on the direct route from Leeds and Bradford by the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway to Manchester.

34. “*Birstal* for ringers,
Heckmondwike for singers,
Dewsbury for peddlers,
Cleckheaton for sheddlers.”

All these places are close to each other in the West Riding. To *sheddle* in the Leeds dialect is to *swindle*.

35. The shrewd character of Yorkshiremen is demonstrated in the saying *He's Yorkshire*, which is equivalent to “he's a sharp fellow.”

36. Another local trait is expressed in the term, *A Yorkshire bite*. This is a common saying in the county of Durham to caution any one who is about to engage in transactions immediately south of the Tees. But Mr. Tegg, in his *One Hour's Reading*, remarks, “The misapplica-

tion of the original meaning of this term is very general. We always use it to convey a feeling of mistrust, or a fear of coming in contact with one more adept in cunning than ourselves. It is true Yorkshiremen are keen dealers; this, however, is no detraction; on the contrary, it is an evidence of industrious habits. The hospitality for which they are so famous gave rise to the term *Yorkshire bite*. It is said the fattened calf and flowing bowl greet the stranger at every step, and after the common salutation, the question, 'Will you bite?' or 'Will you sup?' is sure to follow; and from this originated a term, used as a sarcasm, but which, in point of fact, derived as it is, ought to be used as a compliment."

37. The saying, *Go to Yorkshire!* is explained as meaning that each one of a party is to pay his or her own share of the reckoning.

38. A *Yorkshire way bit* is an overplus, according to Ray, not accounted in the reckoning, which sometimes proves as much as all the rest. Ask a countryman how many miles it is to such a town, and he will return commonly so many miles and a way-bit (*i. e.* wee bit).

DIVINATION BY THE BLADE-BONE.



IN the curious old French Romance of *Eustache le Moine*, which M. Francisque Michel edited in 1834, the hero is described as having been at Toledo,

“ Ou il ot apris nigremanche ; ”

and among other powers there acquired,

“ Et par l'espaule au mouton,
Faisoit pertes rendre à fuison.”—lines 21-2.

The learned editor passed over this passage without illustration or comment, and the following note upon this species of divination was written by me about the time the book was published, 1834, when I frequently visited the shop of the worthy bibliophile referred to, who possessed a good deal of curious out-of-the-way information.

Knowing that Mr. Donald McPherson, a bookseller of Chelsea, who was a Highlander born, was well acquainted with the Highland custom of divining by the shoulder-of-mutton bone, I applied to him for information illustrative of the practice, and by his permission transcribed the following note, from a manuscript account by him of the superstitions of his countrymen.

“Among the Druids, as among every other priesthood, Divination was reduced to a system. It is known that Rhabdomancy, Geomancy, and Chiromancy were practised among them. Whether Augury or Divination by the flight and chirping of birds was practised by them we cannot well say, though it is likely it was, as in some old tales we are told ‘*the birds once spoke Gaelic.*’ Of Haruspice, or divination by the entrails and other parts of the animals sacrificed, one remnant has come down to us pretty entire. It is unnecessary to quote Scripture in order to show that it was the practice of the Ancients to sacrifice on

high places and in graves, as the numerous passages to that effect mentioned in the Old Testament must be familiar to every one. Hence I am inclined to think a high place in the Gaelic is called *Aridh*, from *Ar*, to slay; whence also comes *Ara*, an altar, and *Aireach*, the superintendent of the chief's cattle, the slayer also or Haruspex, who continued in my time, that is as long as the occupation lasted, to be the family butcher, as well as the general superintendent of a gentleman's live stock, and the remnant of Haruspicy which has come down to us has come through the word *Airich*, that is, divination by the shoulder-blade. This was called *Slinnairachd*, from *Slinnig*, the shoulder. In Badenach, a central and isolated, though large, district of Inverness-shire, until lately there were men skilled in this sort of divination. I mention the custom here because the sacrifices offered on *Nollig* and *Callaiwn*, i.e. Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve, were those from which the knowledge of future events could properly be drawn. The last man in the parish of Laggan who was skilled in *Slinnaireachd* died about 70 years ago. His name was MacTavish, and he had been many years *Aireach* to Mr. MacDonald, of Gallovie. There are many wonderful stories told of this man's skill in his art. The following I have often heard related, and once by a man worthy of credit, who averred he had been an eye-witness to it. The fame of MacTavish had travelled to distant parts of the country, and, having come to the ears of a rival diviner, the latter determined to have ocular proofs of his proficiency. For this purpose he took a journey of many miles, and on his arrival at Gallovie announced his errand, and was directed to the house of his brother soothsayer, where of course he was made heartily welcome. Mr. MacDonald invited several of his friends to dine with him on New Year's night, and took care to have the two diviners of the company.

“After dinner a shoulder-blade was presented to the stranger, and he was requested to declare the result of his inspection, be it good or bad. After having pored over it for a certain time he was observed to change colour, and at first he refused to tell what had so affected him; but, when pressed, he positively asserted that some one should be hanged on that domain before morning. The company were of course

variously affected by this declaration; some believed it and were alarmed; some did not, but had good manners enough not to turn it into ridicule. They however agreed in one thing, to let MacTavish re-inspect the blade. He did inspect it, and declared his satisfaction at the skill discovered by the stranger, but added that he had made a slight mistake, for that the ill-fated creature that was to be hanged could be no other than the devil himself, for that it had horns and hoofs. 'But,' said he, jocularly, 'no doubt my friend also has discovered these Satanic characteristics, though politeness towards two of the present company has induced him to conceal the fact;' and he bowed to the minister of the parish and to a Catholic priest who happened to be present. The night passed; but early on the next morning, as MacTavish went his rounds, he found a favourite yearling bull hanged and quite dead. He had put his head through between the bars of a ladder, and, as he was struggling to free himself, the heavy ladder fell across a deep foss, over which the animal was left suspended.

"Before the shoulder-blade is inspected, the whole of the flesh must be stripped clean off, without the use of any metal, either by a bone, or a hard wooden knife, or by the teeth. Most of the discoveries are made by inspecting the spots that may be observed in the semi-transparent part of the blade; but very great proficients penetrate into futurity through the opaque parts also. Nothing can be known that may happen beyond the circle of the ensuing year. The discoveries made have relation to the person for whom or by whom the sacrifice is offered."

Mr. MacPherson, who was a good linguist and well versed in Celtic antiquities, told me that when in Greece with his regiment, for he was formerly in one of the Highland regiments, he discovered that the same mode of divination prevailed in that country; and, being himself somewhat of an adept in the art, he had a trial of skill with a Greek priest, who likewise understood it, which ended in his (MacPherson) displaying so much talent as to be ever after looked upon by the simple inhabitants of the village as a sort of conjuror.

Since writing the above, I discovered two passages on this subject

of *Divination by the Shoulder-blade* in that curious book (of which 100 copies were printed in 1815, under the editorship of Sir Walter Scott, from a MS. in the Advocates' Library at Edinburgh), Kirk's *Essay on the Nature and Actions of the Subterranean, and* (for the most part) *Invisible People heretofore going under the name of Elves, Faunes, and Fairies, &c.*

"The minor sort of Seers prognosticat many future events, only for a months space, from the shoulder-bone of a sheep on which a knife never came, for (as before is said, and the Nazarits of old had something of it) iron hinders all the operations of those that travell in the Intrigues of these hidden Dominions. By looking into the Bone, they will tell if whoredome be committed in the owners House; what money the master of the sheep had; if any will die out of that House for that moneth; and if any cattel there will take a Trake, as if Planet-struck. Then will they prescribe a Preservative and Prevention."—page 17, par. 13.


"There is another kind of Divination, by looking in the shoulder-blade of a sheep, goat, &c. as in a Book, by which some skilfull in that occult science pretend to read future Events, such as the Death of some remarkable Person in a particular tribe or family; foretell general Meetings, Battles, Bloodsheds, etc. and in what quarter of the kingdom or country they are to happen: and besides, will describe what nume-rate Money is to be found in the custody of the owner of the sheep, &c. I had several instances of this kind told me, that were vouched to conviction, which I omit, as it is beyond my present Purpose to enlarge further on the subject, but leave it to the curious."—Par. lxxxi. p. 83, Appendix: *Extracts from a Treatise on the Second Sight, Dreams, Apparitions, &c., by Theophilus Insulanus. 8vo. Edinburgh, 1763.*

Let me refer any reader desirous of knowing more of this widespread form of divination to Sir Henry Ellis's edition of Brand's *Popular Antiquities*, iii. 179-80, ed. 1842, and to much curious information respecting *Spatulamancia*, as it is called by Hartlieb, and an analogous species of divination, "*ex anserino sterno*," to Grimm's *Deutsche Mythologie*, s. 1067-8, 2^{te}, Ausg.

WILLIAM J. THOMS.

INDEX TO THE FOLK-LORE IN THE FIRST SERIES
OF HARDWICKE'S SCIENCE-GOSSIP, Vols. 1—12
(1865—1876).

By JAMES BRITTEN, F.L.S.

T appears to me that the Folk-Lore Society may do a useful work by publishing extracts connected with Folk-Lore from books which would not be likely to come in the way of the ordinary student of the subject, or, in the case of existing obtainable works, by furnishing information as to where such material may be found. In this belief I have gone through the first series of Hardwicke's *Science-Gossip*, and have made an Index of all the passages which bear upon folk-lore. As might be expected, nearly all of these are connected with natural history; many of them contain nothing new, but may be useful in tracing out the distribution of a superstition. I have omitted any reference to a few well-known passages quoted from works which are more or less familiar to the student of folk-lore—such as, for example, Gerard's account of the barnacle goose—as quotations at second-hand are seldom altogether satisfactory; and I believe the present Index contains all the original and personally authenticated folk-lore which is contained in the twelve volumes forming the first series. Nearly all the communications are signed; for some, to which only the initial "B." is affixed, I am myself responsible. I may add that I have given, by means of a cross reference, an *index locorum*, which will be useful to some Members.

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SOME ITALIAN FOLK-LORE.



ENDRILLON and Le Chat Botté, which in Perrault's pages have charmed Europe for centuries, are known to have their doubles in the Cenerentola and Gagliuso of the Pentamerone. This fact is of itself something more than an indication that there must be, as between French and Italian folk-lore, a connection which should extend beyond these charming little romances. More general evidence, however, upon this point has been hitherto wanting.

But the question thus raised is no longer to be discussed upon such restricted material. The recent compilation of Italian folk-lore by Signor Comparetti and his *confrères* has furnished satisfactory proof that between the folk-lore of the two countries there is a close and well-defined affinity. On this and many other grounds the collection to which I allude* is a much more acceptable contribution to this kind of literature than the pleasant tales of Basile and others, though confessedly founded upon such old-world stories. For, unlike the Pentamerone, the narrations of Signor Comparetti and his friends have been taken down in the best faith from rustic tale-tellers in every quarter of the peninsula.

In his pages we of course miss (for this very reason), though not altogether, the arch felicity of Perrault and the sparkling turns of Basile. But, even where these fail, we know that in what Signor Comparetti has taken down there is neither interpolation nor fraud. His tales are the genuine traditions of the country side. In them there is no such literary figment as Mr. Keightley, by his own confession,

* *Novelline popolari Italiane, pubblicate ed illustrate da Domenico Comparetti. Volume primo. Roma, Torino, Firenze.* A second volume will follow.

palmed off on Mr. Crofton Croker,* for publication in his *Fairy Legends and Traditions of the South of Ireland*, and which the unsuspecting Brothers Grimm did their best to disseminate. In the interests of truth and philosophy, the simple idyl about the Cluricaune, which Molly Cogan told Mr. Coote of Kilmallock,† heavily outweighs in worth the false, though brilliantly-told, story of the "Soul Cages," upon which Mr. Keightley wasted his talents.

Signor Comparetti's collection consists of seventy tales. With it as a whole I have no business at present, my only intention being to deal with those stories which have their counterparts in France, and not with all of these.

THE CENERENTOLA. --- 'There was once a man and a woman that had two daughters, one more beautiful than the other : one of these girls kept always in the chimney corner, and for this they called her the Cenerentola. Her mother did not mind this at all, and every morning sent her out with some ducks that she had, and gave her a pound of hemp to spin. One morning, being with the ducks, she arrives at a ditch, and sends them into the water, telling them in a rhyme of her own composition not to drink it if it is troubled, but if it is clear to drink emulously. Scarcely had she said the words than she sees a little old woman standing before her. "Oh, what art thou doing here?" says the little old woman. "I have led these ducks out, and I have got to spin this pound of flax." "Oh, why do they make thee do these things?" "It is mother's wish." "Oh, does she never send thy sister out with the ducks?" "Never." "Come, my little dear, I will make thee a present. Take this comb, and try and comb thyself." She gave her a comb, and the Cenerentola first combed herself on one side, and whilst she was combing herself corn came down out of her hair in quantities, and the ducks set to work eating it until

* Keightley's *Fairy Mythology* (p. 536, in note, Bohn's edition), and Croker's *Fairy Legends* (Murray's edition, vol. ii. p. 30). Mr. Keightley says, "We must here make an honest confession. This story had no foundation but the German legend in p. 259. All that is not to be found there is our own invention. *Yet we afterwards found that it was well-known on the coast of Cork and Wicklow.*" These italics are not Mr. Keightley's.

† Croker's *Legends*, vol. i. p. 211 (The Little Shoe).

they could eat no longer (a crepancia). Then she combs herself on the other side, and there came down out of her hair brilliants and rubies. Then the old woman takes out a box and gives it to her, saying, "Come, put the brilliants and rubies in this, take them home and hide them well in your little trunk." "But now I have got to spin the hemp," said the girl. "Don't give thyself trouble. I am thinking of that," and she strikes with a little wand that she had in her hand and says, "I command that the hemp be spun," and in an instant the hemp was spun. "Now go home," said the little old woman, "and return here every day and thou wilt find me." The Cenerentola returned and said nothing, and kept always in the chimney corner. Every morning she returned to the place and saw the little old woman, and the little old woman made her comb herself, and spun the hemp for her. One morning, after the hemp was spun, the little old woman said to her, "Listen, this evening the king's son gives a ball, and he has invited thy father, thy mother, and thy sister, and they will tell thee in jest that thou may'st go to it if thou likest, but say that thou dost not wish to go to it. Here is a little bird, hide it in thy room, and this evening, when they shall have gone away, go to the little bird, and say to him thus: 'Little bird Verdiriò, make me more beautiful than I can conceive,' and thou wilt see thyself all at once ready dressed for the ball; and take also this little wand, strike with it, and there will appear a coach. Go to the ball and no one will recognise thee, and the king's son will dance with thee; but mind, when they shall go to the refreshment room, call the coach and go away, taking care that nobody sees where thou goest. Then return to the little bird and say to him thus: 'Little bird Verdiriò, make me more ugly than I can conceive,' and thou wilt be the same as before. Go back to thy chimney corner and say nothing." The girl took the little bird, carried it home and hid it in the trunk. The mother, when she saw her come back, said to her, "Thou knowest we are invited to the king's son's ball. Would'st thou wish to go there too?" "Not I indeed," answered she; "amuse yourselves while I stay at home." And in the evening they went away and left her by the side of the ashes. They were scarcely out of the house when she

goes up to the little bird, and does all that the little old woman had told her; and when she was at the ball the king's son danced with her and fell in love with her. But when the time for the refreshment came, she enters her coach and away home. When the King's son lost sight of her, he had her sought for everywhere, but she was not found, and no one knew who she was, and where she lived. Hoping at least that she would come again if he gave another ball, the king's son made it known to all the guests before they went away that to-morrow evening he invited them all to another ball.

The father, mother, and sister return home and find the Cenerentola in the chimney corner. "It has been a lovely ball," said the mother to her, "and there was a lady there that was a beauty, and it is not known who she was. If thou had'st only seen how beautiful she was!" "That does not concern me at all," answered the Cenerentola. "See," said the mother, "to-morrow there will be another ball, thou too can'st go to it." "No, no; I will stop in the chimney corner and be comfortable." Next morning she goes out with the ducks as usual, and finds the old woman. "It went off well," said she; "this evening go there again and do as thou did'st yesterday. But mind, thou wilt see that they will follow thee when thou goest. Then strike with the little wand, and give the command: 'Money.' Take the money and throw it away from the coach. They will stop to pick it up and will lose sight of thee." When the evening was come the father and mother and sister went to the ball and left her at home. The little bird made her become even more beautiful than before. She went, and the king's son was quite pleased when he saw her and danced with her. He had given orders to the servants to keep their eyes upon her. Accordingly, at the refreshment time, when she got into her coach, they began running after it, but she threw down so much money, and they kept picking it up, that they lost sight of her. The king's son in despair determined to give a third ball the next day. The mother, on her return, told the Cenerentola that the next day there would be a third ball, but she pretended not to wish to know about it. Next morning she goes out with the ducks and finds the old woman. "So far it has succeeded, but mind, this evening

thou shalt have a dress with little gold bells and little gold slippers also ; thou wilt see them follow thee ; throw a slipper and money at them ; but now they will discover where thou goest in." Accordingly, when it was evening and she remained behind, the only one at home, the little bird gave her a magnificent dress covered with little gold bells, and also little gold slippers that were a wonder. The king's son danced with her and became more and more in love with her. When she was about to get into her coach as usual, the servants followed her at a distance ; she got in and went off, and the servants after her. She threw out money and one of her gold slippers. But the servants had been told by the king that if they did not discover where that lady lived they should suffer death, so they did not pay any attention to the money. One picked up the slipper, and they all ran so fast that at last they saw where the coach stopped. They told this to the king and they brought him the slipper, and the king rewarded them well. The morning after, the girl goes out with the ducks and meets the old woman. The latter says to her, "Thou wilt have to make haste this morning, the king (so) is coming to fetch thee." She straightway gave her the comb and the box, and spun the hemp and sent her home. The mother had scarcely seen her when she said, "How is it thou comest back so soon this morning ?" "Go and see the ducks how full they are," answered she. The mother saw how full the ducks were and was silent. At noon the king's son arrives, and all run down except the Cenerentola. While they are below she goes to the little bird and says, "Little bird Verdiriò, make me more beautiful than I can conceive." And the little bird gives her back the dress with the little gold bells and the one gold slipper for her foot. The king, meanwhile, asks the man, "How many daughters have you ?" "One, only ; here she is." "What ! you have no other ?" "Yes, your majesty, I have another, but I am ashamed to say she is always in the chimney corner ; she is all over ashes." "Be that as it may, go and call her here," said the prince ; and the father called her, "Ohi, Cenerentola, come down for a bit." She comes down, and the little bells at each step make a jingling noise. "See, stupid," said the mother, "she has dragged down the shovel and the tongs." But

she had scarcely appeared, beautifully dressed as she was, when all were struck with astonishment (*rimasero*). The prince said, "There she is, she whom I was in search of. She lacks nothing but one little gold slipper. Let us see if perchance this is the one." And he took out of his pocket the little gold slipper and gave it to Cenerentola, who blushed deeply and put it on her foot, and saw it was really her own. Then the king's son asked her in marriage, and the father and mother could not say no. The Cenerentola took with her the little bird and all her riches which she had had from the little old woman and went away with the king's son. The marriage was magnificently celebrated, and they gave the father, mother, and sister money, and treated them well, as if they had always been kind to her.

This tale comes from Pisa. It is an old tradition of Tuscany, at the same time that it is an equally old wives' tale of France—of Brittany, where Perrault heard it, and committed it to writing.

The reader will have seen that the Cenerentola's slipper is of gold in this Italian version, as it is in its German form, probably taken direct from Italy, while Perrault has given the improbable reading of "*pantoufle de verre*." This reading Mr. Planché has justified as "representing allegorically the extreme fragility of woman's reputation and the prudence of flight before it is too late."* But, if folk-lore has such deep meaning in one case, it must be equally profound in another. What, then, is shadowed forth in a gold slipper?

More probably, however, "*pantoufle de verre*" is only an invention, or perhaps a mistake, of M. Perrault, for *pantoufle de vair*.

UGLY GOURD.—A certain king was so grieved at the approaching end of his queen, that he vowed he would never marry again. The dying queen begged him not to make so rash a vow, as they had only one little girl, and it was his duty to provide an heir to the throne. "Take another wife," said she, "who shall be your equal, and whose finger this ring shall fit." Saying this she took off her wedding ring, and, giving it to her husband, expired. The king threw it into a little box, and locked it up in a chest, and thought no more of it. One day when the princess, who

* *Fairy Tales of Perrault and others*, p. 521.

had then attained the age of seventeen, was rummaging through this chest she found the ring, which fitted her finger, and ran in great glee to show it him. The king, however, thinking that this was what his wife had prophesied, immediately proposed marriage to his daughter. The horrified young princess seeks the advice of her nurse, who recommends that she shall promise to marry her father, provided he shall present her with such and such dresses,—dresses which the nurse thought it impossible to procure. They are, however, all in turn procured, and the princess has no further excuse to offer, and the marriage is fixed. Nothing remains but to run away in disguise from the palace, and this is arranged by the faithful nurse. The disguise was this : the princess should put on a cambric dress, stitched all over with pieces of dried gourd. When she had put this on she looked like a great walking pumpkin. Besides this the princess took with her some money and the three beautiful dresses that her father had given her. The princess and the nurse left the palace, and travelled many days, until they found themselves in a city. The king's son, who was standing at the gate of the palace with his knights, saw the pair, and was so astonished at the princess's appearance that he sent after them to inquire of the nurse, "Whence come you? who is she? what's her name?" The nurse replies, "Ah, your majesty, we come from a distance seeking our fortunes. She that is with me is named Ugly Gourd." The prince is so amused at this that he offers to take Ugly Gourd into his service as a stable-help and scullion. The offer is readily accepted. The nurse went away about her business, and the princess commenced her new duties. The prince became very familiar with Ugly Gourd, finding her clever and amusing in conversation. One day he says to her in the kitchen that it is his custom to give three balls every year, and asks her to come to the first; as he said so he tapped her knees with the fire-shovel which she had just taken up. "You are joking," says Ugly Gourd; "who am I, to go to a ball?" On the night of the first ball there was a great assemblage of ladies and gentlemen dancing away as hard as they could, when suddenly a lady enters in a silk dress the colour of the air and bestrewn with the stars of the heavens, with a face of paradise, and

fair hair all down her shoulders. Everybody is struck, the prince especially. He runs up to her, gives her his arm, dances with her, and devours her all the time with his eyes. He asks her her name, who she is, and where she comes from; but all he can get from her is, "I am from Rap Shovel upon the Knees." The prince cannot make out where this country is, but to show his pleasure at meeting her he gives her a gold hairpin, which he then and there puts into her tresses. He turns away to take some refreshment, and she avails herself of the opportunity to go away unnoticed by any one. The next day the prince, who from anxiety and love has never been to bed, looks up Ugly Gourd in the kitchen, and tells her all that has happened. "To-night, however, comes off my second ball, and if the unknown lady makes her appearance again I will find out who she is." He then invites Ugly Gourd to the ball, and whilst he is speaking taps her over the shoulders with his riding-whip. In the evening, when the ball is at its best, enters the same lady as before, but more splendidly dressed than ever, for she has on a silk dress the colour of seawater, with ever so many goldfishes swimming about in it. She creates as much sensation as before, and the king's son goes up to her, gives her his arm, dances with her, and asks her name, her condition, and where she comes from. Her only answer is that her country is called "Rap Whip upon the Shoulders." The prince gives her a stone ring with his name engraved on the stone. Ugly Gourd afterwards gets away unnoticed, as she did on the first occasion. The next morning the king's son, who is completely in love (*innamorato cotto*), goes down into the kitchen again, and tells Ugly Gourd all that has happened, and whilst speaking raps her over the feet with the tongs which he has taken up. The third ball came off, and Ugly Gourd made a greater sensation than even at the second, by wearing a dress interwoven with little bells and chains of gold. To the old question where she came from, she answers, "The country where I come from is called Rap Tongs upon the Feet." At this answer the king's son disconsolately bent his head over his hands, and when he raised it the lady was gone. Before this he gave her a medallion portrait of himself. He now fell ill, and would neither eat nor drink. He took to his bed, the Court physicians were called in, and saw that it was melancholy, and there was no cure

for that. One morning he sent for his mamma, and told her he had a wish. "What is it, my dear?" said she. "I want some herb soup, and Ugly Gourd must make it." It was no use expostulating with him upon the unfitness of Ugly Gourd to make it. He insisted that she should. Accordingly the queen mother went down into the kitchen, where she found Ugly Gourd, and gave her the order. When the queen was gone away Ugly Gourd made the soup, and, having put the gold hairpin into it, sent it up by a servant. When he had taken the soup, and found the hairpin in it, he asked for more, and twice soup was sent up to him, the one containing his ring and the other his portrait. Upon this he gets up, goes downstairs, and asks Ugly Gourd who gave these. "I received them from your own hands," says she. The whole story then comes out. The prince and princess are married. Her father is invited to the feast, and recognises Ugly Gourd as his daughter on her producing her mother's ring.

There is another story resembling this in Signor Comparetti's collection called "*Occhi Marci*." They come respectively from Montale, and both stories are the famous French "*Peau d'âne*," which is always in France published in company with Perrault's *contes*, though most probably he did not write it.

QUEEN ANGELICA.—In this tale an old king falls blind, and no one can cure him. One day a physician says, "There is no remedy for this but the water of Queen Angelica; if it can be found the king will get well for certain." Thereupon the king's son goes in search of it. After a great many hardships he is enabled, through the unwonted good nature of an ogre, who takes a fancy to him, to find out the queen's palace. At the entrance there were two lions and two tigers. These he sets asleep by throwing bread, &c., to them. He enters the palace. Queen Angelica is lying on a bed sleeping, covered with seven veils. He lifts the veils, and sees that she is so beautiful that he cannot refrain from kissing her. He afterwards finds the bottle containing the water which he was in search of. The story proceeds to show how the old king is cured, and Queen Angelica, who has been enchanted, but is no longer so, marries the prince.

This story comes from Pisa, while "*La Belle au Bois dormant*," which it resembles in the main incident, is supposed to have been picked up in Brittany.

THE WOODMAN.—Once upon a time there was a woodman who had three daughters. He was very poor, and could not find any fire-wood, and did not know what to do to get his living. One day he was in a wood, and was weeping, when a lady appeared, and observed his weeping. "Why dost thou weep?" "What can I do but weep, my lady?" and he told his wretchedness. "Well," said the lady, "if thou bring me one of thy daughters for a companion, I give thee this purse, and besides, thou shalt always find as much wood as thou wishest." The woodman took the purse, and went home. He told his daughters what had happened, and that one of them must go as a companion to that lady. "I will go," said the eldest, and the father took her into the wood, and found the lady again, and delivered her to her. The lady took her away with her, and carried her to a magnificent palace. When they were arrived there, "See," said the lady to her, "thou art mistress here; I go away in the morning, and return in the evening. These are the keys of the whole palace. I only forbid thee to enter this room," and she showed her a closed door. The girl was pleased at finding herself become, as it were, a lady, and promised not to go into the room. But she was always saying to herself, "What ever can there be in that room?" and at last one day curiosity overcame her, and she opened the room, and saw the lady in a bath with two young ladies, who were reading a book to her. She shut the door again directly. The lady comes home in the evening, and calls the girl. "Thou hast disobeyed. Let me hear what thou hast seen." The girl, quite confounded, tells her what she had seen, and the lady, without saying anything more, took her, cut off her head, fastened the head to a beam by the hair, and buried the body. Next morning she went into the wood, sought out the girl's father, and said to him, "Thy daughter wishes to have with her one of her sisters; wilt thou take her one?" and she gave him some more money. The woodman said, "Yes." He went home, took the second daughter, carried her into the wood, and delivered her to the lady. The lady carried her to the palace, and told what she had

told her sister. Moreover, she showed her the sister's head fastened to the beam, in order that she should pay attention, and not come to the same end. That girl also refrained for a little while, but one day she said, "Here I am alone; if I open the door, who will tell?" and curiosity overcame her. She opened the door, and saw the lady sitting at a beautiful table with cavaliers. She closed the door again directly. The lady comes back in the evening. "Thou hast disobeyed; let me hear what thou has seen." The other told her, and the lady cut off her head, and fastened it to the beam, beside that of the sister. And again, the day after, she went into the wood, and asked the woodman for the third daughter, and the woodman brought her to her. Arrived at the palace, the lady made her the same speech which she had made to the two others, and showed her the two heads. This girl resisted much more than the others, but at last curiosity overcame her also. She opened the door, and saw the lady in a beautiful state-bed. She shut the door again directly. The lady returns home again in the evening. "Oh, let us hear what thou hast seen." "I have seen nothing." "If thou sayest that to me, I will kill thee." But it was of no use (*non ci fu verso*); she kept on repeating that she had seen nothing. When the lady saw she was so obstinate, she made her put on again her peasant's clothes, and put her in the wood, to go about her business.

The rest of the story does not concern us, and I therefore omit it.

It is obvious that the incident which I have translated is virtually the same as that upon which the French tale of Blue Beard turns, viz., a prohibition to open a particular door, of which a young girl has the key—the overpowering effect of curiosity, and the cruel punishment which overtakes its indulgence.

The Italian tale comes from Pisa, while Blue Beard is ascribed to Brittany.*

BELLINDIA,—Once upon a time there was a merchant of Livorno who had three daughters—Assunta, Carolina, and the youngest, Bellindia. The two first were ambitious; Bellindia was modest and domesticated. One day the merchant announced to his daughters that they were

* Planché, *ante*, p. 515.

ruined, through the loss of a ship which had a cargo of his on board. They thereupon retired into the country, to live at less expense, Bellindia attending to household matters, and the two others doing nothing. Several months passed away, when, one morning, the merchant gave them the agreeable intelligence that the ship, instead of being lost, had arrived safely in port, with all her cargo on board, and asked them what he should give them by way of present. The eldest asked for a beautiful silk dress of the colour of the air, the second for a peach-coloured dress, and Bellindia for a rose-tree. The father and sisters thought her foolish for making such a request, and told her so; but she persisted in it. The next day the merchant went off to Livorno, received his cargo, and warehoused it. He bought the dresses for his two eldest daughters, but felt no inclination to comply with Bellindia's wish. In the evening he hired a horse to return home, but, being lost in thought, he left his horse to go his own way, and did not perceive his mistake until he found himself at dark in the middle of a thick wood, and the further he went the more he involved himself in it, until at last he came to a garden, at the end of which was a great palace brilliantly lighted up. He alights from his horse, goes up to the grand entrance, mounts the staircase, enters a saloon, but finds no living soul. He sees, however, a small room, with a table laid out. Being very hungry he enters it, sits down, and helps himself. Throughout the meal he was assisted invisibly, the empty dishes being removed, and others taking their place. After having eaten heartily, the merchant selected a bedroom, undressed, and went to sleep. The next morning he rises, and goes downstairs into the garden. He finds his horse in a stable, well-cared for, and curry-combed. He is about to mount him, when he sees a number of beautiful rose-trees. "Ah!" says he, "as it happens, I shall be able to satisfy Bellindia too;" and straightway culls a nosegay, when he suddenly hears a great noise, and there appears a magician as ugly and terrible as the Evil One, with his glazed eyes darting fire. The latter reproaches the merchant with his ungrateful conduct in wasting his roses after having received such kind treatment. The merchant excuses himself by throwing the blame upon his daughter Bellindia, and the magician accepts the

excuse, but tells him that he must bring her there in eight days, otherwise he will suffer for it. After saying this the magician disappears, and the merchant, finding his right way by enchantment, returns home, and relates his adventures. Bellindia unhesitatingly accepts the condition, and at the end of the eight days is conducted by her father to the magician's palace. There they find everything prepared for her. Over one door is written "Bellindia's apartment." Nobody is to be seen, and Bellindia is left alone in the palace. After roaming through it, she finds her dinner prepared for her in one of the rooms. Whilst she is eating a great noise is heard, and the magician appears. "Don't be afraid, Bellindia; I only wish to know if you like me." "Yes; that I do," answers Bellindia. "Will you marry me?" says he. "Certainly not," says Bellindia, without any hesitation. The magician disappears. The same scene occurs over again every day afterwards. After some months, Bellindia receives a letter from her father, announcing Assunta's approaching marriage to a rich timber merchant, and asking her to attend it. At dinner Bellindia asks the magician's permission. He gives it, but tells her to return in eight days, otherwise she will find him dead. He gives her a ring, the stone of which will lose its colour when he shall be ill. He also tells her to fill a trunk, in the evening, with clothes and jewels and money, and put it at the bottom of her bed. She does so, and the next morning, when she wakes, she finds herself, trunk and all, in her father's house. At first her sisters make a great deal of her, but when they see that she is so happy and rich they become so envious that they take from her the magician's ring, and do not restore it to her until the seventh day, when she finds the stone discoloured. The next day she hastened back to the palace. The magician did not appear until supper-time, when he told her that he had been at the point of death, and should have died but for her return. Again he asks her to marry him, and again she says "No." Two months after this the second sister is engaged to be married. Bellindia repeats her visit to her father, and again her sisters detain her until the eighth day, when Bellindia, to her great grief, finds the stone of her ring is quite black. She returns in haste to the magi-

cian's palace, roams everywhere in search of him, until at last she finds him in the garden, stretched out on the ground, apparently lifeless. She throws herself upon him, embraces and kisses him, saying, "Now there is no more happiness for me. If you were alive I would marry you, to please you." At these words the magician rose to his feet, entirely revived—no longer ugly and terrible, but a most handsome young man, saying, "Thanks, my Bellindia. Know that I am a king's son, and was enchanted by a fairy, so that I should not be able to resume my own figure until I found a young maiden who should promise to marry me—ugly as I was." Bellindia is married and becomes a queen. Her sisters are excluded from the marriage feast, and fall down dead from spite.

This story is identical with the famous "*La Belle et la Bête*" of Madame de Villeneuve. Planché (p. 536) considers the latter to have been founded upon an old tale, and there can be no doubt that it was so. The sentiment which it inculcates is the moral of Sir Gawaine's marriage.

The Italian story comes from Montale.

THE APES.—Once upon a time a king had twin sons, but so little heed had been given to their birth that nobody at court knew which was the firstborn. The king therefore, in order to settle the succession, told them to travel and find wives: whichever wife should make the king the most beautiful and rare present should decide who should be the successor. The sons, who were named Giovanni and Antonio, accordingly mounted their horses, and each set off in a different direction. Giovanni soon finds the daughter of a rich marquis, who is ready to take him on these terms. She gives him a little box containing her present, which Giovanni delivers to the king. In the meantime the other brother Antonio proceeds in his search, until one day he finds himself in a spacious glade in the midst of a dense forest, surrounded by marble statues of men and horses, but not a living soul near. In the far distance, however, he sees a most beautiful palace. He reaches this after a long time, knocks, and an ape opens the door. At the same time two other apes appear, assist him in dismounting, take his

horse, and conduct him into the house. Everywhere there were apes only, and they gave him to understand that he had only to give his commands. Finally he reaches an apartment, where he sits down to cards with four apes, one of whom seems to be superior to the others. Towards evening supper is served, apes sitting at table, and apes serving. Later on he is conducted by apes to a bedroom, and is there left to his meditations over his strange adventures. Being sleepy, however, he undresses and goes to bed, where he sleeps soundly, until he is awakened by a voice which calls him. "Who calls me?" says he. The voice replies by the question, "What have you come here for?" The explanation is given, and the voice promises to provide such a present as will ensure him the kingdom if he will marry her. He consents, and the voice tells him that the next day he will find a heap of letters, which he is to give to a person who will be waiting for them at the door of the palace. The next morning he finds a multitude of letters in his bedroom. He delivers them to a crowd of apes, who deliver them to the king, his father, and the latter lodges all the apes in his city. The next night Antonio is awakened by the usual voice—"Antonio, are you still of the same mind?" "Yes, that I am," says he (*si, che lo sono*). "All right," the voice replies, "to-morrow you shall send another packet of letters to the king." The next morning these letters are conveyed to the king by another contingent of apes, who have all got to be lodged in the city, which is now quite full. These letters inform the king that Antonio has found a wife, who will bring the most beautiful and rarest present. The third night Antonio is again awakened by the voice. "Antonio, are you still of the same mind?" "Yes, that I am," says he; "when I have given my word I never change it." "All right," replies the voice, "to-morrow we will go to the king and get married." As soon as it was daylight Antonio rose, so anxious was he to see his intended. He goes downstairs, and at the door of the palace beholds a magnificent coach, drawn by four big apes, and driven by an ape. They open the carriage door, and within he sees an ape sitting. He takes his seat by her, and they drive off with a grand cortège of apes to the city of the king, his father. The

intended wife of Antonio afterwards delivers to him a little box as her present. The next morning he goes to the room of his intended in order to conduct her to the chapel where they are to be married, when, to his amazement, he finds her no longer an ape, but a most beautiful girl, marvellously well dressed. They are married, of course, and after the ceremony the presents are examined, and Antonio's present, as containing a hundred ells of linen in so small a space, pleases the king the best, and he pronounces Antonio to be his heir. The wife of Antonio declines this arrangement, as she has a kingdom of her own, which has been under enchantment, until her husband, by consenting to marry her, broke it. She then gives Antonio a little staff broken into four pieces, and tells him to place them upon the roof of the palace at the four cardinal points of the compass. He does so, and all the apes in the city turn into lords and ladies, artizans and rustics, horses, and beasts of every sort.

There can be no doubt that this story, coming from Montale, is the same as the French tale of the "White Cat," which latter is too pretty ever to have been an original invention of a mere author or authoress. The Italian form is very quaint and graceful.

FEARLESS JOHN.—There was once upon a time a woman who had a son half-daft, named John. The mother so illused her son that he determined to leave her. Accordingly he went away, and met a man on his road, who said to him, "Where art thou going, good young man?" "I am seeking my father," answered he. "Wilt thou come with me?" "With pleasure." John stayed with him a month, and then he said, "To-morrow I wish to visit my mother." The man tells John to call him the next day before he leaves, and he will make him a present. In the morning John called the father, and he gave him a donkey, and said to him, "Take this donkey, and, when you wish for money, say to him, 'Donkey, spit gold; donkey, spit silver,' and he will spit thee everything." John went away quite pleased. When night came he stopped at an inn. He had his supper, and afterwards, when it was time, said to the donkey, "Donkey, spit gold; donkey, spit silver," and the ass spat out gold and silver. The host was delighted, and

when John was gone to bed he found a companion ass and exchanged it for the other. In the morning John set off with this donkey, and knocked at his own house, and said to the mother, "Mother, I have found fortune ; throw down the bed and we will now get rich." He took a sheet, for the bed was all holes, and laid it out on the ground, and put the ass upon it and began saying, "Ass, spit gold ; ass, spit silver ;" but the ass spat nothing. The mother, feeling quite in a rage, gave him a heap of beatings and sent him off. He went back to the father and told him everything. Again he stayed a month with the father, and then told him that he wished to go and see his mother. "Well," said the father, "call me to-morrow and I will make thee a present." Next morning he gave him a table-cloth, and said to him, "When thou wishest to eat spread this table-cloth and say, 'Table-cloth, get ready,' and it will get everything ready for thee that thou shalt wish." John, quite pleased, took it and went off. In the evening he stopped and slept at the same inn that he did before. The host, directly he saw him, said, "John, come and take thy meal here;" but he replied, "I do not want anything. I have everything here." He then spread the table-cloth and said, "Table-cloth, lay the table." And it got ready wine, bread, meat, fruits, and everything. The host, when John was gone to bed, exchanged the table-cloth for him also. In the morning John set off and went home. The mother said, "Here comes the blockhead." He spread the table-cloth and said, "Mother, make thyself easy, we are going to eat." He commanded the table-cloth, "Table-cloth, lay the table ;" but it furnished forth nothing. Then the mother took a stick and beat him until he was stunned. He went off quietly to the father and told him everything. He stayed there for a month, and then said to him, "Father, to-morrow I wish to go and see mother." "Go ; but call me, for I shall make thee a present." He gave him a cudgel, and said to him, "Go to the landlord and demand back the ass and the table-cloth that he took from thee in exchange, and, if he won't give them to thee, say to this cudgel, 'Cudgel, do thy duty, for I will belabour thee until thou sayest enough.'" John set off, and in the evening he stopped at the inn as before. The host invited him to eat gratis. When he was going to bed he put the

cudgel on a bench and said to the host, "Don't say to this cudgel, 'Cudgel, do thy duty.'" When John was gone to sleep the host, who thought the cudgel must have some hidden virtue, said to it, "Cudgel, do thy duty." It straightway rose up and began to belabour him. He began to scream, and cried out, "John, for charity stop it, it is killing me!" "Until you shall give me back the ass and the table-cloth that you have exchanged it shall belabour you for ever." The host went out to look for the ass and the table-cloth, and the cudgel went after him. Finally he gave him back everything, and then John said to the cudgel, "Cudgel, enough." After this John goes home, and his mother is of course delighted at his good luck.

This story comes from Jesi, and is told in the dialect of the country. There is a foolish sequel to the above which supports John's title to be called fearless; but the English reader would not thank me for giving it.

JOE (GEPPONE).—In times past there was a country-fellow named Joseph, and his landlord was a certain priest and prior named Pier Leone. The rustic had a farm on the top of a hill so buffeted by the North Wind that he could raise nothing. So one day he determined to come to an explanation with him, and set out across the Alps for Castel Ginevino. Arrived at the castle he knocks, and a woman looks out of the window. She tells him her husband is out blowing amongst the beeches, but will be in in a few minutes. By-and-bye the North Wind returns, and Joe tells him his grievances, and implores him to do something for his starving wife and family. The North Wind, touched with compassion, gives him a box, and says to him, "Whenever you are hungry open this and command whatever you please, and you will be obeyed. But mind you give it to nobody. If you do, don't come back again to me." On his journey home, Joe, feeling hungry and thirsty, opens the box and says, "Bring wine and bread and meat." This order is immediately obeyed. When Joe gets home the order is repeated, and his wife and children get an unusual good dinner. He warns his wife not to say anything about the box to the prior, as he knows he will want to take it from him. His

wife, however, tells the prior all about it, and, in the result, the latter induces Joe to part with it on a promise of providing him with corn, wine, and anything he likes. The priest, however, does not keep his promise, and Joe and his family are starving again. So he makes up his mind to go and see the North Wind again. He does so, and, after some remonstrance, the good-natured North Wind gives him another box—this time it is of gold. On his way home Joe opens this and says, “Provide,” and thereupon a tall big man, with a stick in his hand, jumps out and belabours him within an inch of his life. Joe thereupon shuts up the box, and resumes his journey. As soon as he has reached home his wife and children ask him how he has succeeded. He tells them that he has got another box more beautiful even than the first, and desires them to sit down to table. He then opens his box, and two men with sticks jump out and belabour both wife and children until they cry for mercy. Joe shuts the box, and desires his wife to go to the prior, and tell him that he has got another box, more beautiful even than the first; that it is of gold, and provides marvellous dinners. She carries the message to the priest, and he is all anxiety to see Joe. Joe arrives with the box, and shows it in all its shining metal to the priest, who becomes so enamoured of it that he offers to exchange it for the old one. Joe accepts the offer, and the boxes are exchanged. “But you must mind,” he says to the priest, “not to open it until people are very hungry.” “That will do,” replies the priest; “I shall have the titular and many clergymen here to dinner, and I won’t open the box until noon-day.” The morning comes; all the priests say mass, and, afterwards, some of them walk about round the kitchen. “To-day,” they say, “the prior doesn’t mean to give us any dinner. The fire is out; there is no preparation.” But the others, who had seen the effects of the first box, answered, “You will soon see. When dinner-time comes, he opens a box, and makes all sorts of viands appear.” As soon as the dinner hour arrived, the prior told all the priests to take their places, and they anxiously waited to see the miracle of the box. The box is opened, and six men armed with sticks jump out and belabour the whole company, right and left. The box falls from the priest’s hand,

still open, but Joe, who is outside, picks it up, and shuts it. He ever after retained the two boxes, and never lent them to anybody, and became a lord.

This story comes from Mugello.

These two Italian stories have their counterpart in the Breton tale of "Le Tailleur et l'Ouragan," given in the *Mélusine*.* The Hurricane and his mother, of the French tale, is balanced by the Tramontana and his wife of the "Geppone."

But the most curious circumstance of all connected with these stories of France and Italy is that they all agree with a tale of another country, hitherto considered beyond the reach of Latin folk-lore—"The Legend of Bottle Hill," in Croker's collection. Except in its own local colour—for the whisky bottle figures in the county Cork story—there is no real difference. And yet it is a far cry from St. George's Channel to the Mugello, or Jesi, or even Brittany.

THE THREE SISTERS.—Once upon a time there were three poor orphan sisters; one evening as they were sitting chatting round the fire one said, "I should like to be the servant that hands the king his shirt." The other said, "I should like to wait upon his majesty at table." "I," said the third, "should like to be his wife." The king, who was passing, overheard this conversation, and on his return to the palace sent for them all three. They were very much frightened, but of course obeyed the summons. When they came into his presence they confessed what they had said, and the king told them he would comply with their wishes, and he did so; he himself marrying the third. After their marriage his wife, the queen, whilst he was out hunting, was delivered of a beautiful little son. This excited the envy of her sisters, and they determined to make away with it, and show the king on his return a little dog as his wife's child. The real child is put into a box, and orders are given to throw it into the sea. When the king returns home he is shown the puppy in the cradle, and very naturally orders it to be ejected. The same thing happens over again, the queen's second child being

* Col. 129, *et seqq.*

a boy, for which another puppy is substituted; and the third a girl so beautiful, that she seemed a ray of the sun (*una spera di sole*). A kitten being shown to the king in the place of his daughter he loses patience, and orders his master bricklayer to build a wall round the queen up as far as her head, and in that state she is allowed a slice of bread and a glass of water a day.

The fate of the three babies is not what might be expected. A rich merchant, who happens to be on shipboard on each occasion when the boxes containing the children are floating by, picks them up, takes them to his palace, and brings them all up, having no children of his own. One day, when the two brothers are out hunting, and the sister is alone in the house, a poor old woman comes to the palace to beg alms for the souls in purgatory. The sister gives her half a loaf, and the two enter into conversation. The old woman tells her that in spite of all the grandeur of the palace, there lack three things: the yellow water, the singing bird, and the tree that makes sounds like music. If you do not find these three things, says she, you will never know your fortune. This makes the sister melancholy, and the brothers ask her the reason; when she tells them what the old woman has said. The elder brother, when he hears this, tells his sister to be of good cheer, he will find the three objects. Before starting he gives her a white handkerchief, and says, "If this remains white it will be a sign that I am living. If it turns black it will show that I am dead." He travels on until he arrives at night at a cottage in the middle of a great wood where some hermits are living. He knocks, "Who are you?" says an old hermit. "A good Christian," is the reply. "If you are truly a man, put the little finger of your right hand into the keyhole that I may judge of you." The young man does so, and being admitted, tells the hermit his errand. The hermit warns him of his danger, but he persists in his resolution. The hermit then gives him a ball, and tells him to stand upon it, and it will land him at the bottom of a certain hill. There he is to take a horse and ascend the hill opposite. Midway he will hear frightful noises like the clanking of the chains of hell. He is not to be afraid, but to continue the ascent and he will find what he seeks; if he loses

his courage, however, midway, he with his horse will become a marble statue. The young man does what he is told, but, losing his courage when he is arrived half way, he becomes a marble statue. The sister looks at the handkerchief and finds it turned to black. The younger brother tells her not to weep, he will continue the search. He gives her a ruby, which will continue to keep bright as long as he is alive. Precisely the same adventures happen to the younger brother, and he becomes a marble statue also, and the ruby betrays it. The sister then puts on man's clothes, and starts on her own account. She goes over the same ground, sees the same hermit, receives the same advice, but supplements it with her own quick wit. She tells the hermit that she intends to stuff her ears with cotton, and so not hear the noises, and to bandage her eyes tightly with a handkerchief, and so see nothing. "Bravo, bene," says the hermit, taking her for a man. Her contrivances carry her safely to the top of the hill; when there, she takes the cotton out of her ears and the handkerchief from her eyes and sees a chapel and an ornamental basin of bright yellow water. Upon the edge of the basin was a most beautiful bird that sang delightfully; by the side was a tree that sounded as if it played the most beautiful music. This was the fairies' lake. The bird, who was a fairy, then transformed herself into a lovely young woman, and told the sister to take up a vase and fill it with the water, and then go to the tree and take off a branch. The sister does so, and, taking the fairy *en croupe*, canters down the hill, whereupon all those princes and knights that had gone to the fairies' lake, and through fear had become marble statues, all woke up with their horses, and followed in the wake of the sister and the fairy. Amongst this fresh cavalcade the two brothers are recognised. They afterwards all three, in company with the fairy, return home, and the merchant, whom they consider their father, in his joy at finding them alive, gives a grand dinner, to which he invites the king, their real father, and a hundred princes and knights. The fairy restores to the king his children; the queen is released from her confinement, and her two sisters are publicly burnt in a barrel of pitch.

This story comes from the Basilicata. There is another story in

Signor Comparetti's collection called "The Little Speaking Bird," with the same *motif*, but which has curious differences, and comes from another part of the country—Pisa. Of course it is quite plain that either story has its double in the old Persian tale of King Khosroo and his children—"The Envious Sisters" of the *Arabian Nights*. But it may be an old Latin tale for all that. Undeniably there is the same story told in Brittany: "Les trois filles du Boulanger, ou l'eau qui danse, la pomme qui chante, et l'oiseau de vérité."

LION BRUNO. —Once upon a time there was a fisherman who had a wife and three or four children. Misfortune came and he never could catch a fish, not even a sardine. One day, as he was at sea, and his only take being a shell, he (naturally as an Italian) blasphemed Madonnas and Saints. Whereupon, the evil one (*il nemico*) appeared to him, and finally a bargain was made between the two that the fisherman should deliver up to the other his next child, and on this condition should become a rich man. The fisherman, who thought he had the best of this bargain, through its apparent want of reciprocity, was shocked to find that his wife, who was no longer young, in due time afterwards gave birth to a son. The Evil One reappeared and reminded the fisherman of the agreement, and it was settled that the boy should be delivered over to his guardian at the end of thirteen years. Time went on, and the day before the completion of the term the Evil One again made his appearance and reminded the other of his obligation. Accordingly, the next morning the boy was sent off alone to the sea-side. Whilst he was sitting on the shore he picked up some wood lying about, and making crosses of it planted them all round him, so that he sat within a circle of them, holding one also in his hand. The result of this in short was, that when the Evil One came, as he did, he could not touch the boy; and, whilst he was fuming and displaying his fireworks, the good fairy Colina came and carried away Lion Bruno—for that was the boy's name—to her magnificent palace. After a few years he asked leave to go and see his family. She gave him permission to stay away twenty days, after which he was to

* *Mélusine*, col. 206, *et seqq.*

return and marry her. She also gave him a ruby ring, and told him that whatever he should ask he should have. He departs in great state, and, without discovering himself, goes to the miserable hut in which his parents are living—the luck of the Evil One apparently having deserted them. By the power of the ruby Lion Bruno soon sets all this to rights that night by converting the hut into a magnificently furnished palace, and the next morning he declares himself in a picturesque manner, too long to mention here. He then takes leave of his parents and goes to a great city (as it might be Naples, says the story-teller). There he reads a proclamation which announces that whoever shall successfully run the quintain at a star of gold shall have the king's daughter for his wife. Lion Bruno is successful on two days, and gets away to his inn unknown to everyone. On the third day, after having again succeeded and attempted to escape, the king's soldiers catch him and bring him before the king according to orders. There he is told he must marry the princess, and preparations are made for the marriage feast. Lion Bruno, however, cries off by explaining candidly that he is already engaged to a lady that for beauty and grace the princess cannot stand by the side of. The king and his court insist upon seeing this lady, but the ruby is powerless, it cannot compel her to appear, whatever attempt Lion Bruno makes. The fairy, however, hears the appeal, and instead of herself sends the meanest of her maids, who, on her arrival at the court, is pronounced incomparable. Lion Bruno of course disowns her, and the king insists upon seeing the fairy. The attempt is repeated, but the fairy sends the second of her maids. The same explanation takes place as before, and at last the fairy comes herself, and the king and his daughter and his lords were all stupified at her beauty. The fairy, however, is enraged at all this fuss, and takes away the ring from Lion Bruno's hand, saying, "Traitor, you shall find me only when you have worn out seven pairs of iron shoes." The king, seeing that Lion Bruno's skill at the quintain is not his own, has him bastinadoed out of his palace. He walks away, and hearing the noise of a forge he stops, and orders the iron shoes which the fairy required. These were soon made. Lion Bruno puts on one

of these pairs and starts off. He finds three robbers quarreling in a wood, and is chosen to be their arbitrator. They had stolen three objects of great value and could not agree about the division of them. These objects were a pair of boots, a purse, and a cloak. The boots (they tell Lion Bruno) have this virtue: Whoever puts them on, will run a mile faster than the wind. The purse, by saying "open and shut," yields a hundred ducats. The cloak has this virtue: Whoever puts it on and buttons it, sees and is not seen. Lion Bruno, as may be expected, tries all three, and by the aid of the boots gets safely off, leaving the robbers to quarrel amongst themselves while he pursues his journey. He finally arrives at a hut in the middle of a wood and knocks at the door, which is hardly distinguishable for the ivy which grows over it. "Who knocks?" says the voice of an old woman from the inside. "A poor Christian who has lost his way in the dark." The door opens and Lion Bruno enters. "What has tempted you to come to these remote parts," says the old woman, who is no less than Voria, the mother of the Winds. He confides to her that he is in search of his betrothed, the fairy Collina. The old woman tells him he has made a mistake in coming there, for, when her sons return, they will perhaps want to eat him up. To prevent this catastrophe Lion Bruno is put inside a chest, where he creeps into a corner. Soon after the Winds all return, give a push at the door and enter, Scirocco, who is the youngest, coming last. As soon as they are all in they say, "What a smell of human flesh! Christians!" "Oh, go to Bath" (*Oh andate alla malora*), says their mother, "who do you think would risk coming here?" The winds, however, were hard to convince, particularly that hard-headed Scirocco. There was no coming over him for some time at least; at last they were persuaded to eat their polenta, while Lion Bruno was dying of fear in the chest. Next day Voria tells her sons the truth, and they promise to do Lion Bruno no harm. Yesterday it would have been different. Lion Bruno asks them where the fairy Collina is to be found. Nobody knows but Scirocco, who is better acquainted than his brothers with the secret places of the earth. He says the fairy is love-sick, complains of being betrayed by her lover, and is so worn by

grief that she will not live long. Lion Bruno prevails upon Scirocco to show him the way to the palace of the fairy ; and the next morning they set off together, the iron shoes giving Lion Bruno the advantage even over the wind. They soon arrive at the palace, Scirocco blows open the window, and Lion Bruno enters and conceals himself under the fairy's bed. He afterwards discovers himself and the two are reconciled.

In the "Voleur avisé," a Breton story, given in the *Mélusine*, the hero frightens three robbers out of their properties, which are, respectively, a cloak that, being put on, will transport its owner through the air to whithersoever he wishes to go, a hat which confers invisibility, and gaiters which give the faculty of walking as fast as the wind. The hero of the Italian tale gets an inexhaustible purse as well.

My extracts could be easily and largely augmented, but they are sufficient to show as well the close affinity between the two mythologies, as also another fact, that French fairy tales are not Gallic and local except by accident. They have come into Gaul from somewhere else. They have not grown up there. It has been superficially assumed, that, because these French tales have been found in Brittany (at least for the most part), they must one and all be considered to have had, if not a special Armorican, at least a Celtic origin.* But my extracts show that the same tales which have been told by Celtic crones in sequestered and misty Basse Bretagne have been recounted in a more graceful tongue and under a better sky in sunny Tuscany, in the old Neapolitan kingdom, and elsewhere in the peninsula, as familiar household words. No communication between the two countries can be reasonably supposed since the disruption of the Western Empire. This simultaneous appearance of the tales in

* Mr. Planché can be taken as the exponent of this school. In the preface to *The Tales of Perrault* (p. x.) he calls the French fairy tales "legends as old as the monuments of that Celtic race, by whom they were introduced into Gaul." Again, in his Appendix (p. 513) he calls Perrault's Tales, "tales of the nursery which had descended from the earliest ages of the Celtic occupation of Armorica or Bretagne to the peculiar superstitions of which we shall find as we proceed they all have more or less reference."

both countries, thus deprived of close intercourse, disposes of the Celtic ascription. Being found in a non-Celtic country, as well as in a Celtic one, the common origin of the romances cannot be Celtic merely. It should rather be sought in the free and unrestricted means of communion which existed between them when they were both parts of the same empire.

But it is not only in the *motifs* of the stories of the two countries that there is connexion and resemblance, there is also in the personages which figure in both the closest *rapport*. Where the French have an *ogre* and an *ogresse*, the Italians have an *orco* and an *orchessa*, the *ogre** and *orco* being naught else than the classical Orcus degraded from Dis into a gluttonous devourer of unprotected children. Though endued with supernatural powers—above all the gift of scenting out a Christian who has intruded under his roof—he is, in either mythology, as remarkable for his stupidity as his cruelty. Strangely enough, both the *ogre* and the *orco* have tender-hearted wives, though of their own race.†

In each mythology there are witches equally mischievous and malevolent towards all decent man and womankind. At the same time they are sufficiently soft-hearted towards their own class to meet regularly, male and female, at some general rendezvous, anywhere in France, provided it be sufficiently secluded for their *sabbat*, but in Italy always under the secular walnut-tree of Benevento, a lucky difference of meridian which has made the trysting-place of the Italian *streghe*‡ a pilgrimage for modern travellers.

To their rendezvous the French witches repair, after the fashion of

* The *ogre* is not an Ugrian, as some have thought. (Planché, *ante*, p. 518.)

† See *ante*.

‡ Lippi tells us of a wizard and witch (*uno stregone ed una strega*) who renewed an acquaintance first formed by them at Benevento—

“E perche a Benevento essa di lui,
Com' ei di lei avuto avea notizia.”

(Il Malmantile racquistato. Sesto cantare, xxxi.) In “Il figliuolo del re, stregato” (Comparetti, pp. 36, 37), when the clock strikes eleven the three young and beautiful witches are under an obligation to go and dance under the walnut-tree.

their English sisters, astride upon a broomstick. But the gracefulness of antique mythology still adheres to the Italian witch, who has never degraded herself into electing and utilizing so mean a medium for locomotion, or at least very seldom uses it. Before starting the *strega* anoints her whole body with an unguent, which turns her straightway into a bat. Her body is left on the ground as inert and lifeless as the clothes of which she has divested herself. On her return from her merry-making she re-enters the accommodating matter and becomes herself again.*

This is, of course, a mere matter of subordinate detail.

There is, however, an additional property which the *strega* possesses to the exclusion of her French sister. She is a vampire, which the other never has been. She sucks the blood of sleeping people through the little finger, thus inducing an inscrutable and therefore incurable marasmus.†

Fairies play much the same rôle in both the countries. Their

* In the “Il figliuolo del re, stregato,” the witches, while they are rubbing themselves over with the ointment, say, “Ointment, make me go three times faster than the wind.” All then take their seats, and a bat coming out of each one’s mouth, they remain there like dead; at three o’clock the three bats return, re-enter their bodies, and begin to eat their supper. Lippi (Il Malmantile racquistato, terzo cantare), while he does not forget the ointment and the nudity, leaves out the bats altogether, and adheres to the goat and the broomstick. He is speaking of his witch Martinazza :—

“Come quand’ ella s’unge e s’inzavarda
Tutta ignuda nel canto del cammino,
Per andar barbuto sotto il mento
Colla granata accesa a Benevento,
Ove la notte al Noce eran concorse
Tutte le streghe anch’esse sul caprone,
I diavoli, e col Bau caprone le Biliorse
A ballare, e cantare e far tempone.”

† This is inferrible from the “Il figliuolo del re, stregato” (ante). The king is dying in this way through the witches. When the latter are publicly burnt “there arose a stench from their bodies as of the dead in a churchyard, because they ate the blood of the people of the country.”

In the “I dodici buoi” (Comparetti, p. 206) the witch sucks a girl’s blood through her little finger. In “La Nuvolaccia” (*ib.* p. 128) it is through a finger, without specification.

name, of course, is the same, but the Italian *fata* is occasionally a vampire.*

In both folk-lore the winds are personified. They are ogres and eat children. They can smell out the blood of a Christian who has hidden himself in their abodes, whether in Italy or France. There is a mother of the winds in both countries. In Italy she is named Voria. In France, so far as I know, she is anonymous.†

The reader will, I think, agree with me that thus far there is a good family resemblance between these two neoteric mythologies.

HENRY CHARLES COOTE.

* See "La Nuvolaccia," *ante*.

† See "Lion Bruno" and "Geppone" (*ante*). See also "Le sette paia di scarpe di ferro" (Comparetti, pp. 217, 218), and "L'isola della felicità." (*Ib.* 215.)

WART AND WEN CURES.

By JAMES HARDY.

[Reprinted, with additions by the Author, from the *Border Magazine* for August, 1863, pp. 89—96.*]

“Cure warts and corns with application
Of med’cines to th’ imagination.”

BUTLER’S *Hudibras*.



CHILDREN are wont to amuse each other by reckoning up their warts, and from their amount forecasting their future position in society; for each wart is “a sheep;” and some have so many, that their flocks will to a certainty attain patriarchal increase. Sometimes the warts depart spontaneously, and then they have to communicate that they have sold their stock. But more frequently they are not reluctant to part with them, and they would sacrifice all the wealth that they are promised to be rid of the ugly excrescences. The methods that they adopt are various; but none of them, I dare say, are aware how antiquated and of what wide prevalence some of those practices are. I have sometimes amused myself in jotting down these wart charms, and have afterwards gone in quest of their origin to the old writers; by which means I found that the old and the new often blend together, and that people in these matters are still acting as people in like circumstances did some eighteen hundred years ago. Of this we shall have several instances, while proceeding to recount the different supposed cures that have come under notice.

* Only six numbers of the *Border Magazine* were published, namely, the monthly parts from July to December, 1863, and they are now entirely out of print.

1. Steal* a piece of raw meat, rub the warts with it, hide it under a stone, tell no one ; visit it each day, and repeat the rubbing ; as it rots so will the warts decay (Berwickshire, Durham, Cornwall, Northampton). Steal a piece of meat, rub the warts with it, throw it away, and as it rots so will the warts (Northumberland, Suffolk). Steal a piece of meat from a butcher's shop, rub it over the wart in secret, and throw it over a wall over your left shoulder (Devonshire. *Choice Notes*, p. 253). The *Tatler*, No. 21, tells us of the butcher's daughter who "once buried a piece of beef in the ground as a known receipt to cure warts on her hands," and on this account was indicted for sorcery, because "she was seen to dig holes in the ground, to mutter some conjuring words, and bury pieces of flesh, after the usual manner of witches." "Steal a piece of meat from a butcher's stall, or his basket, and, after having well rubbed the parts affected with the stolen morsel, bury it under a gateway at four lane ends, or, in a case of emergency, in any secluded place. All this must be done so secretly as to escape detection ; and, as the portion of meat decays, the warts will disappear" (Lancashire and Yorkshire. *Choice Notes*, p. 250). "The taking away of warts by rubbing them with somewhat that is put to waste and consume is a common experiment," which Lord Bacon saw no reason to discommend. "And I doe apprehend it the rather because of mine own experience. I had from my childhood a wart upon one of my fingers. Afterwards, when I was about sixteen years old, being then in Paris, there grew upon both my hands a number of warts (at least an hundred) in a month's space. The English ambassador's lady, who was a woman far from superstition, told me one day she would help me away with my warts. Whereupon she got a *peece* of *lard* with the *skin* on, and rubbed the warts all over with the *fat side* ; and amongst the rest the wart which I had had from my childhood. Then shee nailed the *peece* of *lard*, with the *fat* towards the *sunne*, upon a poast of her chamber window, which was to the south. The successe was, that within five weeks' space all the warts went

* There had been a supposed virtue in stolen things. Baptista Porta says that the ancients believed that rue throve best when it had been stolen to plant. (*Magiæ Naturalis* fol. 25, Lugduni, 1561.)

quite away, and that wart which I had so long endured for company.” (*Sylva Sylvarum*, p. 216. London, 1651.)

It has been remarked that most of these wart-charms are of the nature of a sacrifice, the warts being transferred to a substitute.

2. Take a black snail or slug, rub the warts with it, and then suspend it upon a thorn; as the snail melts away, so will the warts (Berwickshire, Northumberland, Durham, Lancashire, Hants, Devonshire). “This must be done nine nights successively, at the end of which time the wart will completely disappear. For, as the snail, exposed to such cruel treatment, will gradually wither away, so it is believe the wart, being impregnated with its matter, will slowly do the same” (Sternberg’s *Dialect and Folk-Lore of Northamptonshire*, p. 166). To pierce the mollusc with a pin as many times as you have warts in number is a variation of this in Gloucestershire. (*Notes and Queries*, 4th S. xi. p. 501.) A Berwickshire shepherd had a wart on his nose, and being advised to get a white snail, which he was to kill after rubbing the wart with it, he did so and the wart disappeared. In this, and other prescriptions that appear superstitious, the snail may have been designed to act as a dissolvent. This appears from a specific given by Schröder (*History of Animals as they are used in Physik and Chirurgery*, p. 34. London, 1659). “The liquor of snails,” *i.e.*, those with shells. “Take red snails, cut and mix them with equall weight of common salt, and put them into Hippocrates his sleeve, that in a cellar they may fall into liquor: which is good to anoint gowty and pained parts, and to root out warts, being first pared with a penknife.” Pliny (*Hist. Nat.* lib. xxx. c. 4), for the swelling of the uvula, says, anoint it with the juice drawn by a needle from a snail which is suspended in the smoke. This cruel operation must have been to get the liquor fresh.

3. When a pig is killed, wash your hands in the blood, and the warts will go away (Berwickshire, Galloway). “A young pig being killed with a knife, having his blood put upon that part of the body of any one which is troubled with warts, being as yet hot come from him, will presently dry them; and being after washed will quite expel them away.” (Topsel’s *History of Four-footed Beasts and Serpents*,

p. 532. London, 1658 : apparently from Marcellus.) Lovell, in his *History of Animals*, &c., p. 118, Oxford, 1661, says of swine, from Pliny, "The warm blood kills warts." This appears to be another old medical prescription dying out as a charm. A pig's blood, however, in early times, was used to expiate murder. When Jason and Medea, guilty of the death of Absyrtus, Medea's brother, fled to Circe, she immediately ordered a sucking-pig to be brought, and, having cut the throat of it, rubbed the hands of the two criminals with the blood. The fresh blood of some other animal was equally efficacious as that of a pig to remove warts; thus, that of a mouse, according to Galen, or the mouse itself, on the authority of Marcellus, Rhazes the Arabian, and Albertus Magnus; and a dormouse had the like property. (Lovell, *ubi sup.* 93, 94, 45.) The mouse's blood is originally from Pliny. (*Hist. Nat.* lib. xxx. c. 9.)

4. Rub the wart with eel's blood. The Rev. J. F. Bigge finds this at Stamfordham. (*Tyneside Naturalists' Club's Trans.* v. p. 89.) Lovell, from Jonston, says the head of an eel helps warts (*Hist. Animals*, p. 199); but the full account is in Schröder (*ubi sup.*, p. 111). "They say that the head of an eel cures warts, if the bloody head wherewith the warts are touched be buried in the earth, that it may putrifie." "Take an eel and cut its head off, anoint the parts where the warts are situated with the blood, and bury the head deep in the earth. As the head rots, so will the warts disappear." (*The Physicians of Myddvai*, p. 337.) Pliny (lib. xxx. c. 9) says that the head or blood of a lizard heals warts, and that the blood of a tortoise (whose head was cut off with a knife of bronze, the blood being received into a clean platter) removes wens and warts (lib. xxxii. c. 4).

5. Tie a horse-hair round them, and strangle them. This common procedure is sanctioned by Avicenna, an Arabian physician of the twelfth century. "A horse-hair tyed about warts killeth them, causing a privation of aliment." (Lovell, *ubi sup.* p. 79.)

6. Puff breath on the warts nine* times when the moon is at the

* Another operation, showing the efficacy of the sacred number *nine*, is for boys to take a new pin, cross the warts with it nine times, and cast it over the left shoulder. (Henderson's *Folk-Lore*, p. 109).

full, and the warts will depart (Durham). Sir Thomas Browne (*Vulgar and Common Errors*, p. 272, 1646) refers "unto Christian considerations what naturall effects can reasonably be expected, when for warts we rub our hands before the moone." We shall find something of this in Pliny, for of this encyclopædiac author Sir T. Browne's opinion is not far wrong, that "there is scarce a popular errorr passant in our dayes which is not either directly expressed or deductively contained in his work." Sir Kenelm Digby, in his *Discourse on the Power of Sympathy*, remarks, "One would think it were a folly that one should offer to wash his hands in a well-polished silver bason, wherein there is not a drop of water; yet this may be done by the reflection of the moonbeams only, which will afford it a competent humidity to do it; but they who have tried it, have found their hands, after they are wiped, to be much moister than usually; but this is an infallible way to take away warts from the hands, if it be often used."

7. Count the number of warts, wrap in a bit of paper a stone for each, cast the parcel over the shoulder; whoever gets it, to him the warts will adhere (Durham, Westmoreland). Or put the pebbles in a bag and throw it away (Northumberland). Toss the bag over the left shoulder (Lancashire). Throw the paper packet down at some cross road (*Choice Notes*, p. 252). Rub them with a cinder, and this, tied up in paper and dropped where four roads meet, will transfer the warts to the finder (Yorkshire. *Ibid.* p. 189). A variety of hard objects do as well as stones. The observation originates, at least is first recorded, in Pliny. (*Hist. Nat.* lib. xxii. c. 25.) The passage is thus rendered in Langham's *Garden of Health*, p. 473, London, 1579: "In the new of the moone, take for every wart a pease, and touch the warts therewith, and binde them in a cloute, and caste it behinde thee." The original formula still exists in Buckinghamshire, with a trifling modification. "Touch each wart with a separate green pea, each pea being wrapped in paper by itself and buried; the wart will vanish as the pea decays." (*Choice Notes*, p. 251.) The nodules of grain will do as well as peas (North of Scotland). "Count most carefully the number of warts; take a corre-

sponding number of nodules or knots from the stalks of any of the *cerealia* (wheat, oats, barley), wrap these in a cloth, and deposit the packet in the earth; all the steps of the operation being done secretly. As the nodules decay, the warts will disappear. Some think it necessary that each wart should be touched by a separate nodule." (*Choice Notes*, p. 249.) The following was told me by an Irishman: Find a straw with *nine knees*, and cut the knots that form the joints of every one of them (if there are any more knots throw them away); then bury the knots in a midden or dung-heap; as the joints rot, so will the warts (Donegal). Nine pieces of elder cut from between two knots or knees furnished a good amulet for the epilepsy. (Blochwitz's *Anatomie of the Elder*, p. 52.) It is to be remarked that the Romans had a god named Nodinus, who presided over the knots of the stalks of corn; hence they may have been accounted sacred. With regard to warts, however, nodosities of any sort may be employed. "Make as many knots in a hair as there are are warts, throw it away, a cure follows" (Northumberland). Do the same with a piece of twine; "Touch each wart with the corresponding knot, and bury the twine in a moist place, saying at the same time, 'There is none to redeem it but thee.'" (Manchester. *Choice Notes*, p. 250.)

8. A mysterious vagrant marks the number of warts in his hat, and retires from the neighbourhood, and neither he nor the warts are heard tell of more (Cornwall). This appears to be a perversion of the Levitical scape-goat.

9. Warts disappear in less than a fortnight after being well rubbed with a bean-swad, and the swad thrown away. (Yorkshire, &c. *Choice Notes*, pp. 164, 252). This charm occurs also as a rhyme,

" As this bean-shell rots away,
So my warts shall soon decay."

The white in the interior of bean-swads is an effectual cure (Northumberland). This appears to be a degraded medical recipe, which is still in vogue. "Country people sometimes make use of the juice of the leaves of beans to take away warts." (Meyrick's *Herbal*, p. 3, Birmingham, 1802.) Poultices of the flowers of beans are still applied to

reduce hard swellings (Hall's *Tour through Ireland*, ii. p. 22). The swads and other parts of the bean were formerly used as a cosmetic. "With this object," says Langham, "doe off the huskes of beanes, and steepe them in vinegar or wine." The water of bean-blossoms made the skin fair (pp. 62, 63). And funny old Bulleyne notifies of bean-meal:—"This meal do cleanse the face of women, wasshed therewith, tempered in cold milke at night: straine it through a clothe xx. times, and let it drie on; and in the mornyng, with a hard linen clothe softly, wette in colde water and milke, strike or wype the face therewith, and kepe them from the sonne: like good huswives, spinnyng a thred of small thriffl untill night for their labor." (Bulleyne's *Booke of Simples*, fol. xxix. London, 1562.)

10. Lord Bacon remarks, "They say the like is done by rubbing of warts with a green elder stick, and then burying the stick to rot in muck." (*Sylva Sylvarum*, p. 216.) There is given in Langham's *Garden of Health*, p. 217, a still older charm connected with this witch-defying shrub. "Wartes to avoide—Put three droppes of the blood of a warte into an eldren leafe, and burie it in the earth, and the wartes will vanish away: or put three small stones into a leafe, and lay it in the way, and hee that taketh it up shall have the wartes." Warts are charmed away by crossing them with elder-sticks (Sternberg's *Dialect*, &c., p. 168) Elder-sticks notched with a nick for every wart, each wart being touched with the notch that represents it, are still buried secretly by village-charmers and old wives in English villages. (See *Choice Notes*, pp. 250, 252, 253; also *Works of the Hon. Robert Boyle*, vol. vi. p. 168.) Old wives have had a monopoly of this branch of medical practice since the days of Lucian.* They get no remuneration till the warts disappear.

"Here we behold what doctors ought to be,
Their practice what, and what should be their fee,
Taught by old women, let them learn their part!"

ROBERT HEATH.

* Gipsies in Devonshire also charm away warts; of which there is an instance in W. Henderson's *Folk-lore of the Northern Counties*, &c., p. 109.

Elder had been an old specific. “Wartes.—Wash them with the juice of the berries when the berries be black, and doe so every night and so binde them to in the nights.” (Langham, p. 218.) “Wartes.—Anoint them with the juice of eldren flowers and wormwood.” (*Ibid.* p. 688.)

11. The stagnant water contained in the natural hollows of rocks or stones is an excellent remedy for warts (Berwickshire, and other parts of Scotland). This is “verter” water; a name also applied to the water of healing, or “verter” wells—*i.e.*, wells possessed of virtue. Thus also the water collected in the natural cup, between the connate leaves of the teasel, is represented by Pliny (lib. xxvii. c. 9) to cure warts. “Some use to lay the water that is in the leves about the stalk, upon warts.” (W. Turner, A.D. 1551.) It is still employed as a cosmetic according to Willich. Thus, again, Pliny (lib. xxiv. c. 8) says, “Warts are destroyed by the water that gathers in the concavities of the black poplar tree.” It is more likely that this practice is derived from some pristine idea of the sanctity of the liquid in these excavations, than from a perversion of Christian symbols. In Somersetshire, however, water from the font is reckoned good for ague and rheumatism. In ancient Wales also patients were advised to wash the warts with the water from a font in which the seventh son of the same man and wife is baptized. (*The Physicians of Myddvai*, p. 456.) Water found in the coffin attributed to the “Maid of Meldon,”* at Newminster Abbey, was a specific in removing warts. (*Hodgson’s History of Northumberland.*)

12. If a corpse is passing who was no near relative or “sib,” get a stone, and throw it in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost after the corpse; and, while you mention the name and surname of the deceased, say you “force your warts on him;” as the dead body decays, so will the warts. My informant, when a boy, had cured himself by so doing (Donegal). In the South of Ireland, when

* A Highlander told me that at Iona there is a hollow or basin in a stone which had held holy water. If a stranger was at evening to empty this into the sea, on returning next morning he would find the reservoir again filled. I expect that he would find it salt also.

a funeral is passing by, they rub the warts, and say three times, "May these warts and this corpse pass away, and never more return;" sometimes adding, "in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost." (*Choice Notes*, p. 251.) An Irish servant's formula is to pass his hand over the warts, making the sign of the cross, at the same time bidding them in God's name depart and trouble him no more. He then gives a paper, on which is written, "Jesus Christe that died upon the cross put my warts away," to be dropped by the roadside in God's name. As it wasted so would the warts.—(*Notes and Queries*, 4th S. xii. p. 469).

13. Beware not to let blood from a wart fall upon the hand, otherwise it will be as productive of young warts as the dragon's teeth of old were of fighting men. In the North of Ireland, they say a wart will rise for every drop of blood, and there is some truth in the observation.

14. The patient is taken to an ash-tree, and a pin is stuck first into the bark, then withdrawn, and a wart is transfixed with it till he feels pain, and then again the pin is pushed into the tree. Every wart thus treated perishes, and the pins remain their monuments. (*Leicester. Choice Notes*, p. 252.) Here, again, we recognise the substitutionary principle. The pins are devoted, like those left in the "wishing" or sanative well, as an index of expected or actual benefit. This charm is embodied in a saying,

"Ashen tree, ashen tree,
Pray buy these warts of me."

The ash-tree (*Yggdrasill*) was the sacred tree of the ancient Scandinavians; in the county of Durham, a bunch of ash-keys carried in the hand preserves the bearer from witchcraft; and the herd-boys in the district of Buchan prefer a stick of ash to any other wood. It was anciently planted near villages and onsteads, it is said, in consequence of legislative enactment. Analogous to this charm, a nail driven into an oak-tree is reported to cure toothache. (*Pettigrew's Medical Superstitions*, p. 64.) The prescription, which is very curious, may be found in the Welsh book, *The Physicians of Myddvai*, p. 454.

15. The wart is to be anointed with the milk or juice of some acrid plant. The milk of the spurges is best known. *Euphorbia helioscopia* (sun-spurge, or “littlegood”) was called wartwort as early as the days of Turner, 1562. It is mentioned by both Dioscorides and Pliny. A variety of other plants lay claim to different degrees of credit or antiquity: as, for example, the milk or juice of sow-thistle (Lord Bacon, Parkinson); the wild poppy, argemone (Gerard, Parkinson, Lobel); the greater celandine (Rondeletius, Lobel, Parkinson, Culpepper); mullein (Matthiolum, Langham); marigold (Langham); rue (Parkinson, Culpepper); the fig-tree (Dioscorides, Pliny, &c.); and many others that might be quoted did they illustrate any popular practice. Of woodbine, Langham (p. 681) says, “Stampe the leaves, and apply them to wartes six times, to destroy them.” The same writer says of the sap of the vine, p. 526 :—“Warts or knobs.—Burne the wood, and gather the water or sap thereof at the ende, and rub them therewith.” This is from Dioscorides (lib. v. c. i). Do not boys perform this experiment still, with the moisture issuing from a piece of green or damp wood placed in the fire? The wart-herb (*Verrucaria herba*) of the ancients was the lesser turnsole (*Heliotropium supinum*), which grows in the South of Europe. The British flora supplies us with wart cresses (*Coronopus Ruellii*). The English name is not older than Parkinson, and was translated by him from one of its appellations a little antecedent to his time, *Nasturtium verrucarium*, which which was also called *Verrucaria* at Paris, according to Dodonæus. From the seed-husks of this herb bearing a fancied resemblance to warts, by the doctrine of signatures, it was applied to extirpate them, being thought by “some good to take away wartes by a specificall propertie of the seede.” I shall only refer to one other class of plants, the crowfoots or buttercups. A correspondent of the *Cottage Gardener*, 1852, says :—“There is a very useful property belonging to the *Ranunculus arvensis*, or common crowfoot, which I do not think is generally known. On breaking the stalk of the growing plant in two, a drop of milky juice will be observed to hang on the upper part of the stem; if this is allowed to drop on the wart, so that it be well saturated with the juice, in about three or four dressings the wart will

die, and may be picked off with the fingers. It is the most certain remedy I ever saw, as I have seen people whose hands were covered with them cured in a few weeks. I have also removed them by the above means from the teats of cows, where they are sometimes very troublesome, and prevent them from standing quietly to be milked." But this property of crowfoots is in all the Herbals. Thus Gerard, p. 963 : the leaves or roots of crowfoots stamped "are laid upon cragged wartes, corrupt nailes, and such like excrescences, to cause them to fall away." This again is traceable to Pliny. In lib. xxvi. c. 14, the *Batrachii radix* (root of crowfoot) is a taker away of warts.

16. Spiders' webs. "Some chirurgeons there be that cure warts in this manner: they take a spider's web, rolling the same up on a round heap like a ball, and laying it upon the wart; they then set fire on it, and so burn it to ashes, and by this way and order the warts are eradicated, that they never after grow again." (Topsel's *History of Four-footed Beasts and Serpents*, pp. 789 and 1073; originally taken from *Moufeti Insectorum Theatrum*, p. 237. London, 1634.)

17. The juice of ants. "Reckon how many warts you have, and take so many ants, and bind them up in a thin cloth with a snail, and bring all to ashes, and mingle them with vinegar. Take off the head of a small ant, and bruise the body between your fingers, and anoint with it any imposthumated tumour, and it will presently sink down." (Nonus. Topsel, p. 1080, from Moufeti.) This is a combination of the modern formic and acetic acid, with some grains of ancient superstition.

18. Anoint the warts with spittle in the morning before eating anything. (Berwickshire, Northumberland.) For the remedial properties of "fasting spittle," I must refer to Pliny, *Hist. Nat.* lib. xxviii. c. 4, and elsewhere; J. B. Porta, *Magiæ Naturalis*, lib. i. c. 10, p. 38, Lyons, 1561; *Levinus Lemnius de Occultis Naturæ Miraculis*, lib. ii. c. 44, p. 249. Frankfort, 1611; Brand's *Popular Antiquities*, iii. p. 141; Pettigrew's *Medical Superstitions*, p. 74, &c.

19. Open the warts to the quick, or till they bleed, and rub them

well with the juice of a sour apple ; then bury the apple, and when it decomposes the warts will be obliged to follow its example (Northumberland). My informant ate the remains of the fruit that he operated with, and thought he had done a clever thing, for he cured his warts, enjoyed the bit of apple, and like a good boy conscientiously eschewed witchcraft. Cut the apple in two, rub the wart with each section, tie the apple together, and bury it (Devonshire). Old writers don't tell us that apples eradicate warts, but more than one says that "the ointment of apples softens and supple the roughnesse of the skin, and heals the chaps of the lips, hands, face, and other parts ; also it whitens and smoothes the skin, when sunburnt and rough with the north wind" (Lovell's *Herball*, p. 18, Oxford, 1665) ; while another equally trustworthy, but nearly a century older, avers that the blooms distilled "in balneo Mariæ" are famous for a "red nose." All very pleasing properties these, and with them we conclude our remarks on charms for warts.

20. In regard to wens I have only one incident of recent occurrence to illustrate. A fisherman's child, in one of the villages on the Berwickshire coast, was not long since taken by its parents to some distance, to have a growth or wen on its head stroked by the dead hand of its grandmother. "Straiking with a dead man's hand" is a cure for warts in Galloway. (Mactaggart's *Gallovidian Encyclopædia*, p. 462.) To this responds what Sir Thomas Browne terms committing of "any maculated part unto the touch of the dead." Grose says, that "a dead man's hand is supposed to have the quality of dispelling tumours, such as wens, or swelled glands, by striking with it, *nine times*, the place affected. It seems as if the hand of a person dying a violent death was deemed peculiarly efficacious ; as it very frequently happens that nurses bring children to be stroked with the hands of executed criminals, even whilst they are hanging on the gallows." "In Northamptonshire," says Sternberg ; "many persons are still living who in their younger days have undergone the ceremony, always, they say, attended with complete success. On execution days at Northampton, numbers of sufferers used to congregate round the gallows, in order to receive the 'dead-stroke,' as it is termed. At the

last execution which took place in that town, a very few only were operated upon, not so much in consequence of decrease of faith, as from the higher fee demanded by the hangman." We have it explained to us from Oxfordshire, that the swelling decreases as the hand of the man moulders away (*Choice Notes*, p. 258); which again exemplifies the prevalent notion of vicariousness, from which at first so many of these charms had obtained credibility. In Gloucestershire an ornamental necklace is sometimes made of hair plaited together, taken from a horse's tail—some say that it must be taken from the tail of a grey stallion. (*Notes and Queries*, 5th S. i. p. 204.)

FAIRIES AT ILKLEY WELLS.



THE origin of this tradition belongs to the village of Ilkley in Yorkshire. Its probable date would be—as near as I can find—about 1815, and of its authenticity there is little doubt, as it comes from a native of the village, the late John Dobson, of Holly Bank House, Ilkley, once an intimate friend of the present writer, to whom he gave the following account: “I generally asked them” (the villagers), he said, “what kind of things these fairies were, and they usually maintained that they were active little beings and rather resembled the human form, that they were ‘lill foak’ and always dressed in green, but so agile that no one could ever come up to them. The most trustworthy and creditable evidence I ever got,” he continues, “was from William Butterfield, the bathman up at the Wells here. He was a good sort of a man, honest, truthful, and steady, and as respectable a fellow as you could find here and there. In speaking of the Wells, I mean the buildings and bath collectively. In Butterfield’s time there was only one bath, into which the water was led, and it was at the east end of the present buildings.

“William Butterfield,” he continued, “always opened the door the first thing in the morning, and he did this without ever noticing anything out of the common until one beautiful quiet midsummer morning. As he ascended the brow of the hill he noticed rather particularly how the birds sang so sweetly, and cheerily, and vociferously, making the valley echo with the music of their voices. And in thinking it over afterwards he remembered noticing them, and considered this sign attributable to the after incident. As he drew near the Wells he took out of his pocket the massive iron key, and placed it in the lock; but there was something ‘canny’ about it, and instead of the key lifting

the lever it only turned round and round in the lock. He drew the key back to see that it was all right, and declared 'it was the same that he had on the previous night hung up behind his own door down at home.' Then he endeavoured to push the door open, and no sooner did he push it slightly ajar than it was as quickly pushed back again. At last, with one supreme effort, he forced it perfectly open, and back it flew with a great bang! Then whirr, whirr, whirr, such a noise and sight! all over the water and dipping into it was a lot of little creatures, dressed in green from head to foot, none of them more than eighteen inches high, and making a chatter and a jabber thoroughly unintelligible. They seemed to be taking a bath, only they bathed with all their clothes on. Soon, however, one or two of them began to make off, bounding over the walls like squirrels. Finding they were all making ready for decamping, and wanting to have a word with them, he shouted at the top of his voice—indeed, he declared afterwards he couldn't find anything else to say or do—'Hallo there!' Then away the whole tribe went, helter skelter, toppling and tumbling, heads over heels, heels over heads, and all the while making a noise not unlike that of a disturbed nest of young partridges. The sight was so unusual, that he declared he either couldn't or daren't attempt to rush after them. He stood as still and confounded, he said, as old Jeremiah Lister down there at Wheatley did, half a century previous, when a witch from Ilkley put an ash riddle upon the side of the river Wharfe, and sailed across in it to where he was standing. When the well had got quite clear of these strange beings he ran to the door and looked to see where they had fled, but nothing was to be seen. He ran back into the bath to see if they had left anything behind; but there was nothing; the water lay still and clear just as he had left it the previous night. He thought they might perhaps have left some of their clothing behind in their haste, but he could find none, and so he gave up looking, and commenced his usual routine of preparing the baths; not, however, without trotting to the door once or twice to see if they might be coming back; but he saw them no more."

The whole affair appeared so odd that it was a long time before Butterfield told anybody about it, and besides, he thought their appear-

ance might be a sign of bad luck either to his wife or "bairn." However, after some time had passed, and nothing had come wrong, indeed he had rather prospered than otherwise, he told his wife, and of course she told it to other wives, until it became widely known, and by the time Butterfield got to be an old man, and people ceased to believe such things, he told it to very many. Some believed it and some didn't, but few thought William Butterfield didn't believe it.

I may add that William Butterfield died on the 18th July, 1844, aged 69 years.

CHARLES C. SMITH.

NOTES, QUERIES, &c.

NOTES.

[*Communications for these columns should be addressed to the Hon. Secretary.*]

1. The following cutting from an Irish newspaper was sent to me many years ago by an anonymous correspondent. I never printed it; and it may fill a corner in the Folk-Lore Record .—

The Changeling.—The following is from an old and mutilated manuscript found between the leaves of a large Family Bible, long out of use, in the parish of Kilpatrick, Scotland. It is now, for the first time I believe, presented to the notice of the curious, and merits their attention, as the incident described is a phase of a well-known popular superstition not alluded to in any of our collections of folk-lore. The spelling of the illiterate scribe who committed it to paper, probably with a view to refreshing his memory at some country merry-making, has been modernised.—I am, &c. M.

[Tam]'s Jean, o' staney Auchinleck,
[Had] a bonny wean,
She lo'ed it well, an' kissed it aft,
An' kissed it yet again.

Ae day an ill black fairy cam',
An', when naebody saw,
She stol't awa, an' left her ain,
A brat baith crookit an' sma'.

As quick as lightning was the change,
An' Jean she wonnerit sore,
She had seen lightning blast a tree,
But ne'er a bairn before.

He frettit aye, an' wadna please,
A sair torment was he ;
Said Jean, " ye maun be o' the fairy-folk,
Ye ne'er belong " [to me.]

* * * * *

The bairn, he grat, an' better gr[at,]
 As to the kirk they gaed ;
 An', when they cam' the kirk within,
 An erlish cry he made.

The priest he touched him wi' his finger,
 A little aboon the bree,
 But he signed na the cross, for the changeling thing
 Out o' Jean's arms did flee.

Some say they saw him to the lift,
 Wi' rapid speed ascen',
 Some out o' the door wi' a bright blue flash,
 For me, I dinna ken.

Now you that have got children dear,
 May Heaven my wish ful[fil,]
 An' shield your bairns frae [fairy-folk]
 An' every fearsom[e' ill !]

AN OLD FOLK-LORIST.

2.—The following legend of Rose's Hole, from *the Herts County Press*, 7th March, 1840, is worth preserving :—

Great Berkhamstead.—This town was thrown into a state of considerable alarm about three o'clock on Saturday last, by immense volumes of smoke ascending about two miles from the town, in the direction of the town of Frithesden. Many persons started immediately for the purpose of rendering assistance, with fearful forebodings of the cause, which, however, were relieved on reaching Berkhamsted Common, and finding that it originated in the furze growing thereon having, by some means not accounted for, taken fire. The fire was not extinguished till several acres had ignited, to the great inconvenience of the hares and rabbits. We are glad to find that no suspicion of its being a wilful act can fall upon the poor in the neighbourhood of Frithesden, as we are informed they have an exclusive privilege of cutting the furze, when fit, for their own use as fuel. The most probable conjecture is, that some children had kindled a fire in a deep place called Rose's Hole, and that it caught the standing furze, the sides of the hole being thickly covered therewith. *Aprupos*—Rose's Hole obtained its name from the following circumstance, which occurred some years ago. An old man of Frith-

esden, named Rose, “dreamed a dream” that there was a large chest of gold buried in this spot, and that it was to become the prize of any person or persons who could get it up without speaking a word. He communicated his good fortune in expectancy to a neighbour equally credulous as himself, and to work they went; they dug to a considerable depth, and, as the tradition runs, they arrived at the top of the chest, when Rose was so elated with success, that he exclaimed, “D——n it, Jack, here it is!” The sentence was scarcely uttered when the precious prize sunk into the earth; and, although they renewed their exertions, they never obtained another glimpse of the wished-for treasure.

AN OLD FOLK-LORIST.

3. *Pekin: Spirit Superstition.*—Six or seven feet away from the front of the doors, small brick walls are built up. These are to keep evil spirits out, which only fly in straight lines, and therefore find a baulk in their way. Another dodge to keep spirits away in the case of children, is to dress them as priests, and also to dress the boys as girls, who are supposed to be the less susceptible to the evil influence. —*Extract from letter, dated Peking, Jan. 19, 1875, from Professor J. Milne, F.G.S., to Mrs. E. Arnott, Milne Lodge, Sutton.*

4. *The Child and the Toad.*—A child at Ipswich was sitting one day on the grass when a toad jumped on to its breast and buried itself in the flesh. Neither by pulling nor burning could it be dislodged. The child pined away when its food was intercepted by the intruder, and an appeal was made to the “wise woman” of the district, who instructed the parents to roast a piece of meat before the fire and place the child near at hand with a bowl of milk in its lap. The savoury morsel proved irresistible to the toad, which, leaving the child, and endeavouring to reach the meat, fell into the milk and was drowned.

THOMAS SATCHELL.

5. *Child's Charm for a new Tooth.*—Five-and-twenty years ago it was, and probably is still, customary for children in the county of Durham, when they shed a tooth, to cast it into the fire with a pinch of salt, crying—

“Fire, fire, burn bone,
God send my tooth again!”

THOMAS SATCHELL.

6. A Suffolk maid in the service of my wife is responsible for the following :—

Augury from the Wear of Shoes.

“ Trip at the toe : live to see woe ;
Wear at the side : live to be a bride ;
Wear at the ball : live to spend all ;
Wear at the heel : live to save a deal.”

THOMAS SATCHELL.

7. *Judgment on Swearers.*—If you swear at your hair when combing it, it will all fall off. Two instances occurred at Ipswich within the knowledge of my informant.

THOMAS SATCHELL.

8. *The Crow and the Fox.*—A lady lately repeated the following lines, which she said she had learned more than sixty years ago. As I had never seen them in print, or heard them before, I at once wrote them down :

“ It chanced one day that a crow so black,
Down in a meadow so green,
Had stolen a crust from a pedlar’s pack
And carried it off unseen.
Up in an apple-tree flew the crow,
But, ere she the taste of her prize could know,
A fox came by and stood below,
Down in the meadow so green.

Says Reynard, ‘ Jove’s eagle sure I see
Up in that tree so high.’
Says the crow to himself, ‘ He surely means me,
And a very fine bird am I.’
‘ What eyes,’ says Reynard, ‘ and what an air !
That plumage, how divinely fair !
Never was beauty seen so rare,
Up in a tree so high !’

The crow enchanted, clapp’d her wings,
Alack and well-a-day !
Says Reynard, ‘ I’m sure that angel sings,
Could I but hear the lay !’
The crow look’d round at what he said
(For flattery often turns the head),
She open’d her mouth and dropp’d her bread,
Reynard caught it, and gallop’d away.”

AN OLD FOLK-LORIST.

9. *Nun Monkton Feast*.—On Thursday the annual feast was held at this village, and, as a new Maypole had to be reared, the festival attracted far more notice than usual. Steamboats were run from York, and conveyed three hundred passengers. On the arrival of the first steamboat from York the passengers were met at the river side by a number of villagers, who gave them a hearty welcome. Several lads carried small gaily-coloured flags, and a procession having been formed the visitors were conducted through the gardens of the Priory, which is occupied by the Misses Crawhall. They went thence to the village green, where the rearing of the Maypole, the most important item in the day's programme, was to take place. The new pole is pitch-pine, and was brought from Hull. It was reared on the site of the old one, and is about 10 feet deep in the earth. It measures 17 by 16½ inches at the base. It is painted in black and white spiral bands, and surmounted by a vane. The expenses, including the purchase of the pole and its rearing, amounted to about 25*l.*, which was defrayed by subscription. The task of rearing, which was a rather formidable one, having been successfully accomplished, and the pole declared upright, a wreath of foliage and artificial flowers was run up to the top amidst cheers. The May Queen, for which in ancient times the prettiest girl in the parish was chosen, was then placed in a chair covered with red cloth and adorned with flowers. Her name is Annie Wright, and, though she would probably have satisfied the condition formerly considered indispensable to obtain that honour, the rector, who performed the ceremony of crowning, stated that she had been selected because she was the best girl in the school. A procession was formed, headed by the York Model Brass Band, and the May Queen was borne on the shoulders of two men around the Maypole. Foot-racing and other sports were subsequently held, and dancing on the green was extensively indulged in. The proceedings were brought to a close with a special service.—*Yorkshire Gazette*, June 29, 1878. X.

10. *Well-finding*.—The following is from an out-of-the-way place,

and worth preserving, I think : “ Superstition guides the Coimbatore cultivator in the choice of site for a well. Generally he procures a sheep and drives it to the land in which he desires to sink a well ; he then pours some water over the head of the animal and sets it at liberty ; it wanders over the ground, and the spot of land over which it shakes its head to get rid of the moisture is the place in which the well must be sunk. I could never get from any ryot a satisfactory explanation of the reason they had in following this ridiculous practice ; they admitted, when pressed, that the result of sinking wells in sites so selected was often highly unsatisfactory. The prevalence of this superstitious custom shows what uncertainties attend well-sinking in this district, for the men who follow this practice frequently possess a good deal of common sense in regard to matters which daily occupy their time and attention. They select their site for a well in much the same way as men in other countries decide a course of action on the result of the throw of a coin. However, the Coimbatore custom is quite as sensible as the practice adopted in other countries, when the divining-rod is used in the search for water.”—*Mr. Robertson's Report of his Tour in Coimbatore. (House of Commons Paper, No. 143, 1878.)*

G. L. G.

11. *Hand-itching Augury*.—The following lines come (untouched) from the Suffolk maid previously mentioned :—

“ If your head itches,
 You're going to take riches ;
 Rub it on wood,
 Sure to come good ;
 Rub it on iron,
 Sure to come flying ;
 Rub it on brass,
 Sure to come to pass ;
 Rub it on steel,
 Sure to come a deal ;
 Rub it on tin,
 Sure to come *agin*.”

THOMAS SATCHELL.

12. *Tradition in connection with the Burial Place of the Argyll Family.*—“The old family burial-place of the Argylls is at Kilmun, on the Holy Loch, a small but picturesque inlet on the Clyde, behind Dunoon. It is about twenty-five miles from Inverary, the ancient seat of the Argylls, but it is only a few miles from Roseneath, another residence of the family. At the burial-ground of Kilmun there still remains the old tower of a monastery, founded by St. Mun, or St. Mund, as the old ‘Croniklis’ write it. A new parish church has taken the place of the monastic structure, and behind the church is a very plain building which is well known in the locality as containing the coffins of the ducal family. The small loch whose waters come close up to this old cemetery most probably had some early reputation for sanctity, and, like Iona, became a place of burial to which kings and chiefs were brought from great distances. The kings of Norway, ‘Frae over the faem,’ came to the Island of Columb’s Kil to find their last resting-place. So it is with the Holy Loch; it seems to have been from the earliest times a sort of ‘Campo Santo.’ Stone kists have been found round its shores, with human remains in them. Nearly opposite the present burial-place is a very large tumulus, called ‘Tamnara,’ on the top of which is a small inclosure, now the burial-place of one of the local proprietors. On the south side of this Loch Seante, as this small inlet of water is called in Gaelic, at the village of Sandbank, there is an interesting old cromlech, which is known in the region as ‘Adam’s Grave,’ this name carrying with it a reputation which might explain the great sanctity of the locality, and at the same time it might be supposed to give the ancient precedent which has been followed by the burial of chiefs all round the lake, and a precedent also followed by the Macallum More up to the present day. Unfortunately the tradition that Adam was buried at this place does not find confirmation from any source. The probable origin of this curious myth may be that the sound of the Gaelic name led to it. It is called Ardnadam, and the name of the estate on which it stands is derived from it. This word, according to one theory, is supposed to be a corruption of Ardan-na-tuam, which has been translated the ‘height of the grave.’ Lovers come from all parts of Cowal to make

their vows at this old shrine. The lady has to creep into the recess formed by the stones, and, holding the hand of the gentleman, who stands at the entrance, he repeats in Gaelic a curious oath, and the spot is considered so sacred that a terrible fate is believed to befall any one who should prove unfaithful to their troth when it has been thus plighted. Such are some of the interesting associations connected with this beautiful island loch, on whose shore the late Duchess of Argyll will be borne to her last resting-place on Wednesday next." —*Daily News*, June 7, 1878. H. A. WALKER.

13. *Indian Superstition and Barbarity*.—(From the *Detroit Gazette*.) —“A singular instance of Indian barbarity, which occurred in this quarter, has been related. The Potawatomic prophet died suddenly last winter, and as usual his death was attributed to witchcraft. The surviving relatives determined who was the witch, and resolved to avenge his death. The unfortunate woman with her husband was at the house of a trader when two brothers and a nephew of the prophet arrived and avowed their determination to kill her. They told the family of the trader not to be under any apprehensions, for that no injury would be done them. They directed the woman to sit down, and one of them struck her on the head, another gave her a second blow, and the third cut her throat. They then dug a grave and buried her. The husband was a spectator of these proceedings, and after their termination he was compelled to pass over her grave, that she might not return, and then to run round a tree, and depart as though he had escaped. The last manœuvre was to prevent the return of the prophet to reproach his relatives with sparing the life of the husband.” I cannot find the date of this cutting, but perhaps it may be worth noting. A. B. G.

14.—*Curious Custom at Biddenham*.—The following note is taken from the Introduction to Mr. William M. Harvey's forthcoming work on the History of the Hundred of Willey:—“I have been favoured by Captain Robe, of Biddenham, with the subjoined account of a curious custom practised in olden times at that village, on Sept. 22:—‘A little procession of villagers carry a white rabbit, decorated with scarlet ribbons, through the village singing a hymn in honour of St Agatha.

All the young unmarried women who chance to meet the procession extend the first two fingers of the left hand pointing towards the rabbit, at the same time repeating the following doggerel :—

Gustin, Gustin, lacks a bier,
Maidens, maidens, bury him here.

This ceremony is said to date from the year of the first Crusade.' ”

G. L. G.

15. *Suggestions for future work*.—It was thought advisable to record in these pages the following suggestions as to future undertakings by the Society:—(a) “ It would be a useful task for the new Folk-Lore Society to publish a manual of sayings, &c., which could be used as a guide for inquirers, and particularly for ascertaining the prevalence of forms in a shire or district. Such a work would sell. It should be like the *Anthropological Notes and Queries* of the British Association Committee published by Stanford, that is, the form derived from the Admiralty manual for travellers; it would be most useful for folk-lore inquirers at home and abroad.” Dr. Hyde Clarke, in *Notes and Queries*, 5th Ser. x. p. 205 : (b) “ English Folk-Books—I remember the pleasure with which I read among the publications of the good old Percy Society two contributions by Mr. Halliwell on our *Popular Histories and Chap Books*, and the hope I then felt that the Percy Society would reprint some of them. That hope was never realised. But may I not now indulge in a revival of it? Surely Mr. Halliwell-Phillipps, whose liberality in such matters is so well known, would give the Council the benefit of his information on the subject, and perhaps permit them to reprint some of the very rare and interesting folk-books described by him as in his possession. I am told there have been several collections of such *nugæ literariæ* published in Germany and France. We have nothing of the sort in England, I believe, with the exception of Tabard's Collection, published now more than half a century since, and very scarce, and the collection of *Gammer Gurton's Story Books*, edited by Ambrose Merton—a pseudonym, as I infer from the *Handbook of Fictitious Names* to which I have just referred, for the original editor of ‘N. and Q.’ If so, I may surely hope for the support of a proposal which

I think likely to meet the approval of all who take an interest in the objects of the Folk-Lore Society.”—B. F. E. in *Notes and Queries*, 5th Ser. x. p. 287 : (c) To this may be added a note by Mr. A. Russell Smith upon a book included in his sale catalogue.—“ *Histoire des Livres populaires, ou de la littérature du Colportage, depuis le 15^e siècle jusqu’à 1852, par Charles Nisard* (2 vols. 8vo.), Paris, 1854, is the only complete history of foreign chap-book literature written. Beyond two small volumes by Mr. Halliwell in the Percy Society, nothing has been done for the extensive chap-book literature of this country. A similar work to the above is much needed : ” (d) In an old note-book in which more than fifty years ago—before publishing societies came into existence or the word ‘folk-lore’ had been ever heard of—in which I was wont to jot down references to anything that struck me in my desultory reading, I have just stumbled upon some memoranda which would seem to have been made anticipatory of some such organization as the Folk-Lore Society. The sight of these jottings recalls vividly the delight with which I had been devouring Walter Scott’s “Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border,” and the charming Introduction to it, in which he states his opinion “that a work of great interest might be compiled upon the origin of popular fiction and the transmission of similar tales from age to age and from country to country,” and the ambition by which my young mind was fired to gain some credit by carrying out what Sir Walter had suggested. But, although I soon found I had not the learning necessary to do so, I have never abandoned my interest in the subject, and have read all that Dunlop, Crofton Croker, Keightley, Price the learned editor of Warton, and others, have written upon this tempting theme. But such a history of popular fiction has never yet been written, nor can it be undertaken with any completeness until the vast mass of materials on which it must be based—the fragments which are scattered through innumerable journals—are, if not collected and printed, at least recorded and indexed. If the Folk-Lore Society undertake this it will do a great and good work. What that task is the memoranda which I have just recovered will serve to show. They refer to Somersetshire Legends in *The Quarterly Review*, vol. xviii. p.

27 *et seq.*; to articles in the old *Literary Gazette*, No. 430; to a Legend of the Lincolnshire Eel, in the *Mirror* for November, 1828; to a paper on Nursery Literature in *Blackwood* for July, 1825; and to another article in the same magazine for May, 1818. The task of collecting, calendaring, or indexing materials so widely scattered is clearly beyond the powers of any individual, but it might be readily accomplished on the co-operative principle now developing itself in literature, as elsewhere; and if the Members of the Folk-Lore Society are invited to assist in such a labour of love, and the governing body give publicity to the result, there can be little doubt that some successor of Scott will be found to smelt the ore thus brought to the surface, and extract from it the precious metal, and so do for popular fiction what Jacob Grimm in his "*Deutsche Mythologie*" has done for another branch of popular antiquities, the "superstitions," and what he and his illustrious brother Wilhelm have commenced in the third volume of their delightful "*Kinder und Haus-Märchen*" on this very subject.—"Senex" in *Pall Mall Gazette*, 14 Nov. '78.

QUERIES.

[Communications for these columns should be addressed to the *Hon. Secretary*.]

1. *Origin of St. Monday, the Shoemaker's Holyday*.—Is the following newspaper cutting, taken from an old scrap-book, at all authoritative, or does it reflect an older tradition and verse? "While Cromwell's army lay encamped at Perth one of his most zealous partizans, whose name was Monday, hanged himself. Cromwell offered a reward to the person who should compose the best lines on his death. A shoemaker of Perth brought the following:—

‘Blessed be the Sabbath day,
And cursed be worldly pelf;
Tuesday will begin the week,
Since Monday's hanged himself.’

Cromwell was so well pleased with this *jeu d'esprit* of the Souter's,

that the reward was not only awarded him but he also ordered that the shoemakers should have henceforth the Monday of each week as a holyday.”

A. B. G.

2. *Folk-medicine*.—Having in preparation a small work on folk-medicine for the Folk-Lore Society, I shall be indebted to any correspondents who may favour me with notes illustrative of my subject, which comprehends charms, incantations, and those traditional habits and customs which relate to the preservation of health and the cure of disease, practised now as formerly, at home and abroad.—WILLIAM GEORGE BLACK, 1, Alfred Terrace, Hillhead, Glasgow.

3. *Curious Superstitions*.—Does it not come within the province of the Folk-Lore Society to explain the nature of apparitions? I have for years been trying vainly to arrive at the solution of this: Eight or ten years ago a young servant-girl in Dorking told me that she was afraid to go into the garden after dark for fear of seeing “*a holy post*.” What this might be like she had not the most distant idea; but Mrs. —, a neighbour, had told her there was one to be seen in the garden, and, to quote the girl’s words, spoken with every appearance of genuine terror, as she stood with me at the garden door one dark autumn night, “she durstn’t for her life go out.” I have never met with this superstition since. If it is not a new invention of my informant’s informant to frighten a silly girl, my own idea is that it may be the apparition of a “headless cross,” some wayside or church-yard crucifix, mutilated by sixteenth-century iconoclasts, and believed afterwards to haunt its old neighbourhood in punishment for their impiety. I should be very glad of some light on the subject.—CATHERINE GUNNING.

4. *The Merry Dun of Dover*.—Many years ago I heard a gentleman, who in early life had been in the merchant service, give an account of a remarkable phantom-ship called “the Merry Dun of Dover,” a vessel of such enormous proportions that a boy who had been sent up to the mast-head was a grey-headed old man by the time he got back on the deck. I have an impression that he quoted an old ballad on the subject, but as to this I am not quite certain. Can anybody furnish the complete legend of “the Merry Dun of Dover?”

A GREYBEARD.

5. *Kit with the Can'stick : Tantarabobus without a Tail*.—Looking over a very old note-book, I have stumbled upon two little queries, which have remained unsolved for years, but which may find answers from some member of the Folk-Lore Society. The first is, Who is “Kit with the Can'stick?” I presume it is a local name for the Will-o'-the-Wisp. But, if so, where is the name in use, and what is the popular explanation of it? The second is, Who is “Tantarabobus without a Tail,” and what is the legend? There is a third query as to the Giant Woglog; but to that I have found a clue. K. T. L.

6. *Ignis Fatuus*.—Might I ask a question with respect to this phænomenon? Is it ever seen now, or has the system of drainage, which has been so extensively carried on of late years, extinguished it, and with it an element of a once generally and wide-spread piece of folk-lore? K. T. L.

7. *Dragon and Serpent Legends*.—There are many old legends throughout the country of the existence in past times of huge serpents, generally, but not always, with wings, though in all cases equally venomous and voracious. A complete list of these, or references to where accounts of them may be found, would be of considerable interest. The following examples may perhaps lead to the completion of a more perfect list:—

Durham.—An ancestor of the Blackett family slew a monstrous reptile, dragon, worm, or flying serpent, in memory of which the descendants have to render service to the bishop at his first coming into the county by presenting him with a falchion, and thereby secure to themselves the possession of a large estate.—*Relics for the Curious*, 1824, i. 36.

Essex.—In the seventeenth year of Henry the Second, A.D. 1170, there was seen at St. Osythes a dragon of marvellous bigness, which, by moving, burned houses.—*Baker's Chronicle*.

Gloucester.—In the parish of Deerhurst, near Tewkesbury, a serpent of prodigious bigness was a great grievance to all the country by poisoning the inhabitants and killing their cattle. The king proclaimed that whoever killed the serpent should enjoy an estate in the

parish which belonged to the Crown. One John Smith placed a quantity of milk in a place to which the serpent resorted, who gorged the whole agreeable to expectation, and then lay down to sleep. Smith then cut off his head with an axe. His family enjoyed the estate when Sir Robert Atkyns compiled this account; and Mr. Lane, who married a widow of that family, had then the axe in his possession.—*Relics for the Curious*, i. 34.

Hereford.—There is a tradition of a furious combat at Mordiford, near Hereford, between a winged serpent and a condemned malefactor, who was promised pardon on condition of his destroying the monster. He succeeded in killing the dragon, but fell a victim to the venom of his poisonous breath. A picture of the dragon was preserved in the church at Mordiford, and represents a flying serpent about 12 feet long, with a large head and open mouth.—*Relics for the Curious*, i. 35. *Notes and Queries*, 3rd Series, vol. vii.

Oxon.—Near Chipping Norton there was found, in 1349, a serpent having two heads, and faces like women, one being shaped after the new type of that time, another after the manner of the old attire, and it had great wings after the manner of a bat.—*Stow's Annals*, p. 387.

Sussex.—At St. Leonard's Forest, near Horsham, there was seen, in 1614, a strange and monstrous serpent or dragon, to the great annoyance and divers slaughters both of men and cattle. It was reported to be nine feet in length, a quantity of thickness about the middest, and somewhat smaller at both ends. It "rids way" as fast as a man can run, is very proud of countenance, and hath on either side of him two great bunches as big as a large foot-ball, which some think will in time grow to be wings. He can cast his venom from him about four rodde.—*Harl. Miscellany*, iii. 106.

Yorkshire.—At Wortley or Wantley, near Rotherham, there was a terrible dragon with wings, claws, teeth, and a sting in his tail, which was slain by a knight named More.—*Percy Reliques*.

Some of these legends are said to be merely allegorical; thus the Mordiford dragon is set down as the flag of Uther, surnamed Pendragon, the chief of the Silures, about A.D. 448. And the Dragon of Wantley is said to be Sir Francis Wortley, who, having bought a large estate,

endeavoured to acquire a number of surrounding properties and interests by unfair means, in which he was resisted and defeated by More the lawyer. Be this as it may, and these explanations are by no means universally admitted, the fact remains that there are many of these legends, and the belief in great land-serpents seems to have been in old times as general as that of sea-serpents in modern days. The most distinct, as well as the most recent, is the legend of the St. Leonard's serpent in 1614, which my old friend Dr. Mantell, the geologist, used to quote as possibly to be traced to the Saurians, whose fossil remains are now to be found abundantly in the neighbouring beds of Tilgate Forest. I believe there are not many counties from which serpent legends, more or less definite, could not be collected.—

DRACO.

8 *Local Rhymes and Sayings* —Will Members of the Society forward me any items of the above that they may know of, and also give references, where possible, to explanations as to their origin? I have received from Mr. W. Andrews a small pamphlet on Derbyshire local rhymes, and Mr. Walter Rye has kindly placed in my hands a similar collection for Norfolk.

G. L. GOMME.

9. *Seamen's Superstitions*.—Perhaps no class of men are more superstitious than sailors, and few legends are more curious and interesting than those of the sea. I hope in time the Folk-Lore Society will collect a complete series of these sayings and beliefs. At the present time I am collecting notes on "unlucky ships," and should be glad of any information as to the grounds on which old salts say, "Aye, I always knew she would never come to port; I knew she were bound to Davy Jones." A ship may be unlucky if her keel was laid on an unlucky day, or if she were launched on a "black day," or by some one sure to bring ill-luck. Again, she may have been built on an unlucky slip; or many other circumstances may have predicted evil.

It was surely a remarkable circumstance that the two twin ships, perhaps the finest built in the last century, which were launched from the same yard, and were named after our king and queen, were both so unfortunate. I refer to the Royal George and the Royal Charlotte, which I believe were built in the same yard; the former was lost at

Spithead, 29th August, 1782, when about 900 lives were sacrificed; the latter was lost at Leghorn on the 7th March, 1800, when about 700 lives were lost. They were both splendid ships; the Royal George carried 108 guns, the Royal Charlotte 110 guns; and, if I am correct in the statement that they were launched from adjoining slips, sailors could hardly be blamed if they said that it was an unlucky yard, and that any ship subsequently built in it would be "sure to come to grief." I should like to know of any instance of ships which sailors predicted as thus fore-doomed, which subsequently were lost. S.

10. *Legendary Origin of British Towns*.—Will Members of the Society forward me references to, or accounts of, the legendary origin of towns or places in Great Britain and Ireland? G. L. GOMME.

11. *Irish Folk-Lore*.—In the preface to the second volume of *The Fairy Legends and Traditions of the South of Ireland*, Mr. T. Crofton Croker says: "To Mr. Lynch, in particular, my thanks are due for a manuscript collection of legends from which those of 'Diarmid Bawn the Piper' and 'Rent Day' have been selected."

Where is this collection now? Will its possessor consent to its being made available to the purposes of the Folk-Lore Society?

H. C. C.

NOTICES AND NEWS.

The Council found that they could not undertake a translation of Grimm's *Deutsche Mythologie* with their present funds; and it is therefore satisfactory to learn that Mr. Swan Sonnenschein, a member of the Society, is about to publish a translation by Mr. James S. Stallybrass. A prospectus, to be obtained from Mr. Sonnenschein, has been issued, and we are promised a translation worthy of the German original. The subscription price is 12s. per volume, though Members of the Society will be entitled to receive them at 10s. each.

Mr. William George Black has in hand for the Society a small volume, to be entitled *Folk-Medicine*. It is hoped that it will be ready next year.

Members of the Society will be glad to learn that the Government has determined to bear the expense of publishing the Bushmen collections made by Dr. Bleek, and now carried on by Miss Lloyd.

Miss Lloyd, to whom the task of continuing Dr. Bleek's Bushman investigations has been entrusted, is thinking of starting a periodical of small size devoted to Bushman, Hottentot, and Kaffir Folk-lore. The price would not exceed 6*d.* a part, and from six to twelve parts might be published a year. Before the periodical can be started, however, it will be necessary that a sufficient number of subscribers be obtained to cover the expense of publication. Intending subscribers are requested to write to the Rev. A. H. Sayce, Queen's College, Oxford.

Mr. Theal has formed a large and valuable collection of Kaffir Folk-lore which he is anxious to publish, if only he can secure a sufficient number of subscribers for the work. Specimen sheets have already been printed. Subscribers names may be sent to Mr Theal, Lovedale, South Africa, or to the Rev. A. H. Sayce, Queen's College, Oxford.

The Council received a very fair return of the Bibliographical slips sent out in June last. But Mr. Thomas Satchel, a member of the Society, has been for a number of years collecting materials towards compiling a full Bibliography of folk-lore publications, and he has kindly placed his collection and his services as editor at the disposal of the Society. It is hoped that a preliminary short list of titles may be ready for printing early next year. As Mr. Satchell has paid his chief attention to separate publications, members of the Society will greatly aid the object in view by sending particulars of *Articles in Journals*. Slips for this purpose may be had of the Honorary Secretary.

The want of good indexes to some of our folk-lore books has long been felt, and it is suggested that the publication of such indexes should be undertaken by the Society. Mr. James Britten, F.L.S. is in hopes of being able to undertake the Index to the folk-lore columns of *Notes and Queries*. The Council will be glad to receive further help in this direction.

A transcript of the Aubrey MSS. entitled "Remains of Gentilisme and Judaisme," in the Lansdowne Collection at the British Museum

is now being made for the Society. It is hoped that the first part will be issued to Members about March next, under the editorship of Mr. James Britten, F.L.S.

Mr. Bawden, of Canada, drew attention to the collections on North American Indian Folk-tales which exist in the archives of some of the learned Societies of America. In compliance with the suggestion of Mr. Bawden, the Council have been in correspondence with the American Societies, and they have met with very favourable replies. It is hoped that a good collection of North American Folk-tales will thus be obtained.

The Reverend W. D. Parish, the author of the well-known Glossary of Sussex Dialect, is preparing for the Society a collection of East Sussex Superstitions.

Mr. J. W. McCarthy, of the British Legation at Yedo, Japan, has promised to forward to the Society a large collection of proverbs, folk-tales, and superstitions which he has been making for the last two years during his residence in Japan.

The Reverend T. F. Thistleton Dyer has just published a work called *English Folk-Lore*, and is engaged upon two other works—*Shakespearian Folk-Lore* and *Comparative Folk-Lore*.

Mr. James Napier has published a work on the Folk-Lore of the West of Scotland, and promises to let the Society have some collections he has made on Ballad Folk-Lore.

The Hon. Secretary has in hand some miscellaneous slips and notes, many of which should be placed in the hands of collectors on the subject to which they refer before being printed in the Records of the Society. Members who are devoting their attention to special branches of folk-lore should communicate with the Secretary, and members having miscellaneous collections should send them at once to the Secretary. By this means it is hoped that scattered notes may be placed in the hands of collectors of special branches of folk-lore and published from time to time in the Records, under the care of authors who have paid considerable attention to their particular branches.

